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POEMS

BY

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH:

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS,

BY

H. T. TUCKERMAN.

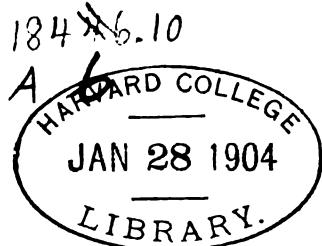


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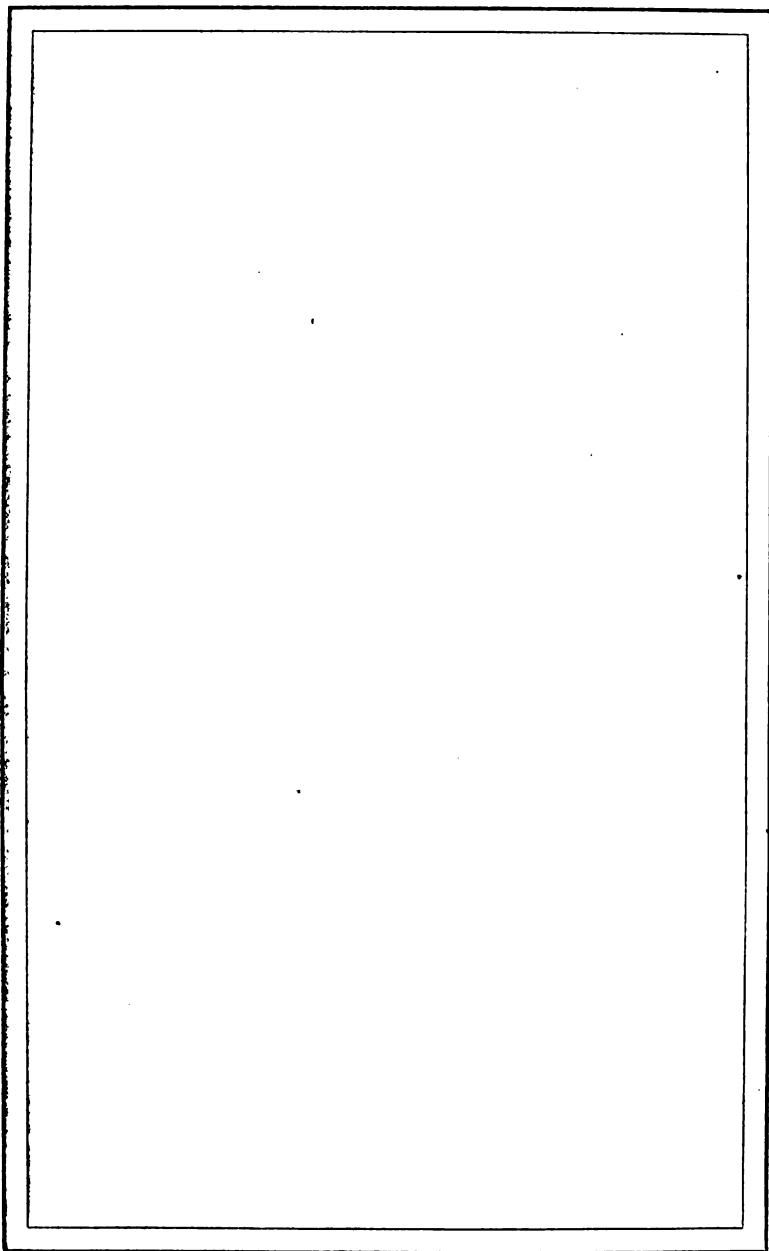
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INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

ESSAY
ON THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF WORDSWORTH,
BY H. T. TUCKERMAN.*

In an intellectual history of our age, the bard of Rydal Mount must occupy a prominent place. His name is so intimately associated with the poetical criticisms of the period, that, even if his productions are hereafter neglected, he cannot wholly escape consideration. The mere facts of his life will preserve his memory. It will not be forgotten that one among the men of acknowledged genius in England, during a period of great political excitement, and when society accorded to literary success the highest honors, should voluntarily remain secluded amid the mountains, the uncompromising advocate of a theory, from time to time sending forth his effusions, as uncolored by the poetic taste of the time, as statues from an isolated quarry. It has been the fortune of Wordsworth, like many original characters, to be almost wholly regarded from the two extremes of prejudice and admiration. The eclectic spirit, which is so appropriate to the criticism of Art, has seldom swayed his commentators. It has scarcely been admitted, that his works may please to a certain extent, and in particular traits, and in other respects prove

* Taken, by permission of the Author, from "Thoughts on the Poets."
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wholly uncongenial. Whoever recognises his beauties is held responsible for his system; and those who have stated his defects, have been unfairly ranked with the insensible and unreasonable reviewers who so fiercely assailed him at the outset of his career. There is a medium ground, from which we can survey the subject to more advantage. From this point of observation, it is easy to perceive that there is reason on both sides of the question. It was natural and just that the lovers of poetry, reared in the school of Shakspere, should be repelled at the outset by a new minstrel, whose prelude was an argument. It was like being detained at the door of a cathedral by a dull *cicerone*, who, before granting admittance, must needs deliver a long homily on the grandeur of the interior, and explain away its deficiencies. "Let us enter," we impatiently exclaim; "if the building is truly grand, its sublimity needs no expositor; if it is otherwise, no reasoning will render it impressive." The idea of adopting for poetical objects "the real language of men, when in a vivid state of sensation," was indeed, as Coleridge observes, never strictly attempted; but there was something so deliberate, and even cold, in Wordsworth's first appeal, that we cannot wonder it was unattractive. Byron and Burns needed no introduction. The earnestness of their manner secured instant attention. Their principles and purposes were matters of after-thought. Whoever is even superficially acquainted with human nature, must have prophesied a doubtful reception to a bard, who begins by calmly stating his reasons for considering prose and verse identical, his wish to inculcate certain truths which he deemed neglected, and the several considerations which induced him to adopt rhyme for the purpose. Nor is this feeling wholly unworthy of respect, even admitting, with Wordsworth, that mere popularity is no evidence of the genuineness of poetry. Minds of poetical sensibility are accustomed to regard the true poet as so far inspired by his experience, as to write from a spontane-

ous enthusiasm. They regard verse as his natural element—the most congenial form of expression. They imagine he can scarcely account wholly to himself, far less to others, for his diction and imagery,—any farther than they are the result of emotion too intense and absorbing to admit of any conscious or reflective process. Even if “poetry takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity,” it must be of that earnest and tender kind, which is only occasionally experienced. Trust, therefore, was not readily accorded a writer who scarcely seemed enamored of his art, and presented a theory in prose to win the judgment, instead of first taking captive the heart by the music of his lyre. Nor is this the only just cause of Wordsworth’s early want of appreciation. He has not only written too much from pure reflection, but the quantity of his verse is wholly out of proportion to its quality. He has too often written for the mere sake of writing. The mine he opened may be inexhaustible, but to him it is not given to bring to light all its treasures. His characteristics are not universal. His power is not unlimited. On the contrary, his points of peculiar excellence, though rare, are comparatively few. He has endeavored to extend his range beyond its natural bounds. In a word, he has written too much and too indiscriminately. It is to be feared that habit has made the work of versifying necessary, and he has too often resorted to it merely as an occupation. Poetry is too sacred to be thus mechanically pursued. The true bard seizes only genial periods, and inciting themes. He consecrates only his better moments to “the divinest of arts.” He feels that there is a correspondence between certain subjects and his individual genius, and to these he conscientiously devotes his powers. Wordsworth seems to have acted on a different principle. It is obvious to a discerning reader that his muse is frequently whipped into service. He is too often content to indite a series of common-place thoughts, and memorialize topics

which have apparently awokened in his mind only a formal interest. It sometimes seems as if he had taken up the business of a bard, and felt bound to fulfil its functions. His political opinions, his historical reading, almost every event of personal experience, must be chronicled in the form of a sonnet or blank verse. The language may be chaste, the sentiment unexceptionable, the moral excellent, and yet there may be no poetry, and perhaps the idea has often been better expressed in prose. Even the admirers of Wordsworth are compelled, therefore, to acknowledge, that with all his unrivalled excellences, he has written too many

*"Such lays as neither ebb nor flow,
Correctly cold, and regularly slow."*

Occasional felicities of style do not atone for such frequent desecration of the muse. We could forgive them in a less-gifted minstrel; but with one of Wordsworth's genius it is more difficult to compromise. The number of his indifferent attempts shades the splendor of his real merit. The poems protected by his fame, which are uninspired by his genius, have done much to blind a large class of readers to his intrinsic worth. Another circumstance has contributed to the same result. His redeeming graces often, from excess, become blemishes. In avoiding the tinsel of a meretricious style, he sometimes degenerates into positive homeliness. In rejecting profuse ornament, he often presents his conceptions in so bald a manner as to prove utterly unattractive. His simplicity is not unfrequently childish, his calmness stagnation, his pathos puerility. And these impressions, in some instances, have been allowed to outweigh those which his more genuine qualities inspire. For when we reverse the picture, Wordsworth presents claims to grateful admiration, second to no poet of the age; and no susceptible and observing mind can study his writings without yielding him at least this cordial acknowledgment.

It is not easy to estimate the happy influence Wordsworth has exerted upon poetical taste and practice, by the example he has given of a more simple and artless style. Like the sculptors who lead their pupils to the anatomy of the human frame, and the painters who introduced the practice of drawing from the human figure, Wordsworth opposed to the artificial and declamatory, the clear and natural in diction. He exhibited, as it were, a new source of the elements of expression. He endeavored, and with singular success, to revive a taste for less exciting poetry. He boldly tried the experiment of introducing plain viands, at a banquet garnished with all the art of gastronomy. He offered to substitute crystal water for ruddy wine, and invited those accustomed only to "a sound of revelry by night," to go forth and breathe the air of mountains, and gaze into the mirror of peaceful lakes. He aimed to persuade men that they could be "moved by gentler excitements" than those of luxury and violence. He essayed to calm their beating hearts, to cool their fevered blood, to lead them gently back to the fountains that "go softly." He bade them repose their throbbing brows upon the lap of Nature. He quietly advocated the peace of rural solitude, the pleasure of evening walks among the hills, as more salutary than more ostentatious amusements. The lesson was suited to the period. It came forth from the retirement of Nature as quietly as a zephyr; but it was not lost in the hum of the world. Insensibly it mingled with the noisy strife, and subdued it to a sweeter murmur. It fell upon the heart of youth, and its passions grew calmer. It imparted a more harmonious tone to the meditations of the poet. It tempered the aspect of life to many an eager spirit, and gradually weaned the thoughtful from the encroachments of false taste and conventional habits. To a commercial people it portrayed the attractiveness of tranquillity. Before an unhealthy and flashy literature, it set up a standard of truthfulness and simplicity.

In an age of mechanical triumph, it celebrated the majestic resources of the universe.

To this calm voice from the mountains, none could listen without advantage. What though its tones were sometimes monotonous—they were hopeful and serene. To listen exclusively, might indeed prove wearisome; but in some placid moments those mild echoes could not but bring good cheer. In the turmoil of cities, they refreshed from contrast; among the green fields, they inclined the mind to recognise blessings to which it is often insensible. There were ministers to the passions, and apostles of learning, sufficient for the exigencies of the times. Such an age could well suffer one preacher of the simple, the natural, and the true; one advocate of a wisdom not born of books, of a pleasure not obtainable from society, of a satisfaction underived from outward activity. And such a prophet proved William Wordsworth.

Sensibility to Nature is characteristic of poets in general. Wordsworth's feelings in this regard have the character of affection. He does not break out into ardent apostrophes like that of Byron addressed to the Ocean, or Coleridge's Hymn at Chamouni; but his verse breathes a constant and serene devotion to all the charms of natural scenery—from the mountain-range that bounds the horizon, to the daisy beside his path:

"If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to thee I turn
I drink out of an humbler urn,
A lowlier pleasure;
The homelier sympathy that heeds
The common life our nature breeds,
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure."

He does not seem so much to resort to the quiet scenes of the country for occasional recreation, as to live and breathe only in their tranquil atmosphere. His interest in the universe has been justly called personal. It is not the passion of a lover in the dawn of his bliss, nor the

unexpected delight of a metropolitan, to whose sense rural beauty is arrayed in the charms of novelty; but rather the settled, familiar, and deep attachment of a friend:

"Though absent long,
These forms of beauty have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye :
But oft in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;
And passing even into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration."

The life, both inward and outward, of Wordsworth, is most intimately associated with lakes and mountains. Amid them he was born, and to them has he ever looked for the necessary aliment of his being. Nor are his feelings on the subject merely passive or negative. He has a reason for the faith that is in him. To the influences of Nature he brings a philosophic imagination. No transient pleasure, no casual agency, does he ascribe to the outward world. In his view, its functions in relation to man are far more penetrating and efficient than has ever been acknowledged. Human education he deems a process for which the Creator has made adequate provision in this "goodly frame" of earth and sea and sky.

"He had small need of books; for many a Tale
Traditionary, round the mountain hung;
And many a legend peopling the dark woods,
Nourished Imagination in her growth,
And gave the mind that apprehensive power,
By which it is made quick to recognise
The moral scope and aptitude of things."

* * * * *

"One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."

Accordingly, both in details and combination, Nature has been the object of his long and earnest study. To illustrate her unobserved and silent ministry to the heart,

has been his favorite pursuit. From his poems might be gleaned a compendium of mountain influences. Even the animal world is viewed in the same light.—in the much-ridiculed Peter Bell, Susan, and the White-Doe of Rylstone, we have striking instances,—to present the affecting points of its relation to mankind has been one of the most daring experiments of his muse :

“One lesson, shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows and what conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride,
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.”

It is the common and universal in Nature that he loves to celebrate. The rare and startling seldom find a place in his verse. That calm, soothing, habitual language, addressed to the mind by the common air and sky, the ordinary verdure, the field-flower, and the sunset, is the almost invariable theme of his song. And herein have his labors proved chiefly valuable. They have tended to make us more reverent listeners to the daily voices of earth, to make us realize the goodness of our common heritage, and partake, with a more conscious and grateful sensibility, of the beautiful around us.

In the same spirit has Wordsworth looked upon human life and history. To lay bare the native elements of character in its simplest form, to assert the essential dignity of life in its most rude and common manifestations, to vindicate the interest which belongs to human beings, simply as such, have been the darling objects of his thoughts. Instead of Corsairs and Laras, peerless ladies and perfect knights, a waggoner, a beggar, a potter, a pedlar, are the characters of whose feelings and experience he sings. The operations of industry, bereavement, temptation, remorse, and local influences, upon these children of humble toil, have furnished problems which he delighted to solve. And who shall say that in so doing, he has not been of signal service to his kind ? Who shall say that through such portraits a wider and truer sympathy, a more vivid sense of human

brotherhood, a more just self-respect, has not been extensively awakened? Have not our eyes been thus opened to the better aspects of ignorance and poverty? Have we not thus been made to feel the true claims of man? Allured by the gentle munitons from Rydal Mount, do we not now look upon our race in a more meek and susceptible mood, and pass the lowliest being beside the highway, with more of that new sentiment of respect and hope which was heralded by the star of Bethlehem? Can we not more sincerely exclaim with the hero of *Sartor Resartus*, "Poor, wandering, wayward man! Art thou not tried, beaten with many stripes, even as I am? Ever, whether thou wear the royal mantle or the beggar's gaberline, art thou not so weary, so heavy laden? O! my brother, my brother! why cannot I shelter thee in my bosom, and wipe away all tears from thine eyes?"

In accordance with this humane philosophy, Childhood is contemplated by Wordsworth. The spirit of the Saviour's sympathy with this beautiful era of life, seems to possess his muse. Its unconsciousness, its ignorance of death, its trust, hope, and peace, its teachings, and promise, he has portrayed with rare sympathy. Witness, "We are Seven," the "Pet Lamb," and especially the Ode, which is perhaps the finest and most characteristic of Wordsworth's compositions. A reader of his poetry, who imbibes its spirit, can scarcely look upon the young with indifference. The parent must thence derive a new sense of the sacredness of children, and learn to reverence their innocence, to leave unmarred their tender traits, and to yield them more confidently to the influences of Nature. In his true and feeling chronicles of the "heaven" that "lies about us in our infancy," Wordsworth has uttered a silent but most eloquent reproach against all the absurdities and sacrilegious abuses of modern education. He has made known the truth, that children have their lessons to convey as well as receive:

"O dearest, dearest boy, my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn."

He has made more evident the awful chasm between the repose and hopefulness of happy childhood, and the cynical distrust of worldly age. He thus indirectly but forcibly appeals to men for a more guarded preservation of the early dew of existence, so recklessly lavished upon the desert of ambition :

" — Those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day;
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence."

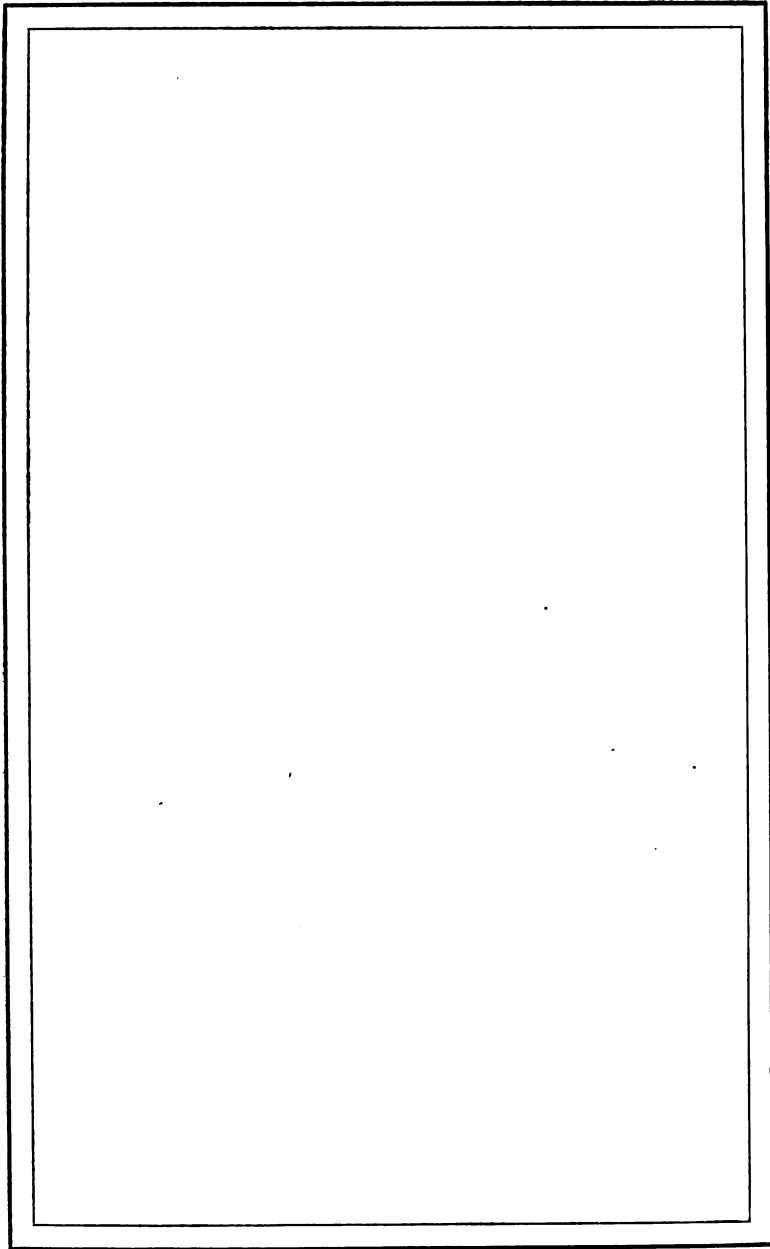
He has exemplified that the worst evil of life is rather acquired than inherited, and vindicated the beneficent designs of the Creator, by exhibiting humanity when fresh from his hand. This is a high moral service. Upon many of those who have become familiar with Wordsworth in youth, such impressions must have been permanent and invaluable, greatly influencing their observation of life and nature, and touching "to finer issues" their unpledged sympathies. It is with the eye of a meditative poet that Wordsworth surveys life and nature. And thus inspired, a new elevation is imparted to "ordinary moral sensations," and it is the sentiment rather than the subject which gives interest to the song. Hence it is absolutely necessary that the reader should sympathize with the feelings of the poet, to enjoy or understand him. He appeals to that contemplative spirit which does not belong to all, and visits even its votaries but occasionally ; to "a sadness that has its seat in the depths of reason;" he professes to "follow the fluxes and refluxes of the mind when agitated by the great and simple affections of our nature." To enter into purposes like these, there must exist a delicate sympathy with

human nature, a reflective habit, a mingling of reason and fancy, an imagination active, but not impassioned. The frame of mind which he labors to induce, and in which he must be read, is

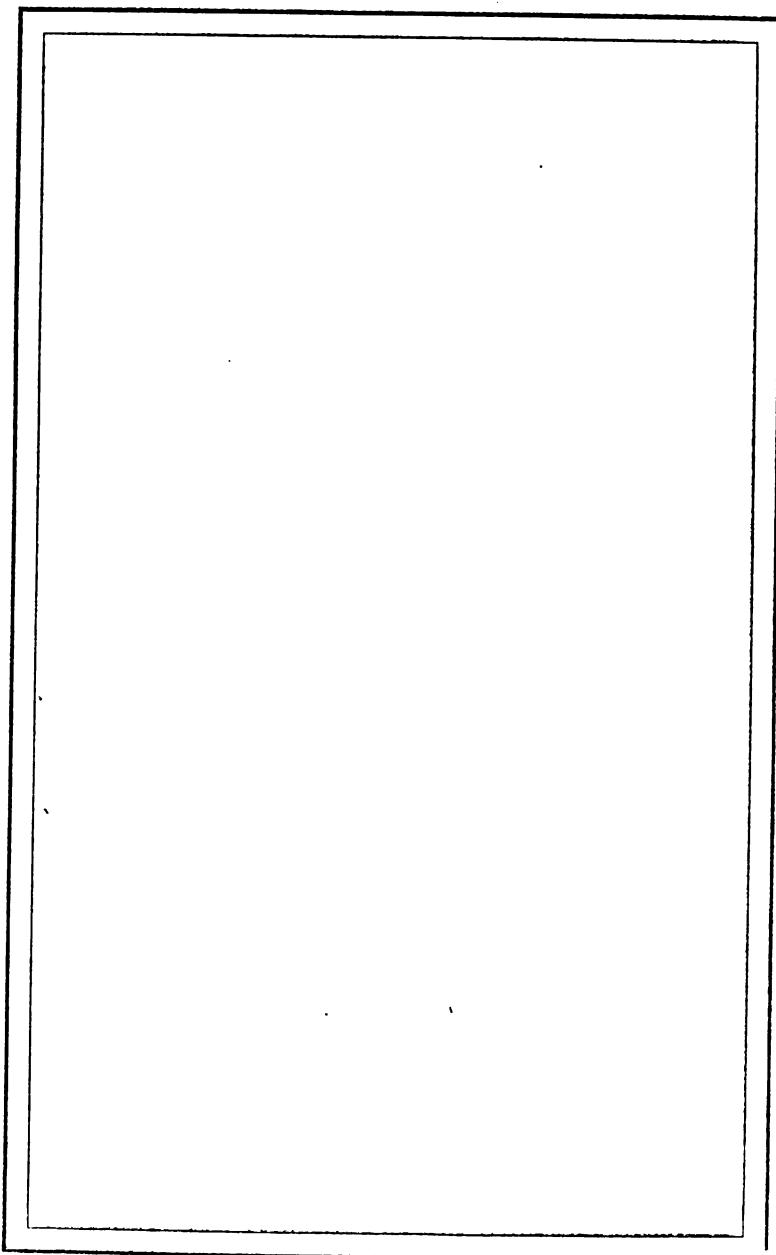
"That sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease, and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air." * * * *

"— that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until the breath of this corporeal frame,
And even the motion of our human blood,
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul.
While, with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things."

This calm and holy rausing, this deep and intimate communion with Nature, this spirit of peace, should sometimes visit us. There are periods when passionate poetry wearies, and a lively measure is discordant. There are times when we are calmed and softened, and it is a luxury to pause and forget the promptings of desire and the cares of life; when it is a relief to leave the crowd and wander into solitude; when, faint and disappointed, we seek, like tired children, the neglected bosom of Nature, and in the serenity of her maternal smile, find rest and solace. Such moments redeem existence from its monotony, and refresh the human heart with dew from the urns of Peace. Then it is that the bard of Rydal Mount is like a brother, and we deeply feel that it is good for us to have known him.



P O E M S.



P O E M S

O P

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

SONNET.

NUNS fret not at their convent's narrow room ;
And hermits are contented with their cells ;
And students with their pensive citadels ;
Maids at the wheel, the weaver at his loom,
Sit blithe and happy ; bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness-fells,
Will murmur by the hour in foxglove bells :
In truth the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is : and hence to me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground ;
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find brief solace there, as I have found.

TO A SKY-LARK.

ETHEREAL minstrel! pilgrim of the sky!
Dost thou despise the earth where cares abound?
Or, while the wings aspire, are heart and eye.
Both with thy nest upon the dewy ground?
Thy nest which thou canst drop into at will,
Those quivering wings composed, that music still!

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood;
A privacy of glorious light is thine;
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine;
Type of the wise who soar, but never roam;
True to the kindred points of Heaven and Home!

1825.

THE PET-LAMB.

A PASTORAL.

THE dew was falling fast, the stars began to blink;
I heard a voice; it said, "Drink, pretty creature,
drink!"
And, looking o'er the hedge, before me I espied
A snow-white mountain-lamb with a Maiden at its
side.

Nor sheep nor kine were near; the lamb was all
alone,
And by a slender cord was tethered to a stone;
With one knee on the grass did the little Maiden
kneel,
While to that mountain-lamb she gave its evening
meal.

The lamb, while from her hand he thus his supper took,
Seemed to feast with head and ears; and his tail with pleasure shook.
“Drink, pretty creature, drink,” she said in such a tone
That I almost received her heart into my own.

‘Twas little Barbara Lewthwaite, a child of beauty rare!
I watched them with delight, they were a lovely pair.
Now with her empty can the maiden turned away:
But ere ten yards were gone her footsteps did she stay.

Right towards the lamb she looked; and from a shady place
I unobserved could see the workings of her face:
If Nature to her tongue could measured numbers bring,
Thus, thought I, to her lamb that little Maid might sing:

“What ails thee, young One? what? Why pull so at thy cord?
Is it not well with thee? well both for bed and board?
Thy plot of grass is soft, and green as grass can be;
Rest, little young One, rest; what is’t that aileth thee?

What is it thou wouldest seek? What is wanting to thy heart?
Thy limbs are they not strong? And beautiful thou art;

This grass is tender grass ; these flowers they have
no peers ;
And that green corn all day is rustling in thy ears !

If the sun be shining hot, do but stretch thy wool-
len chain,
This beech is standing by, its covert thou canst
gain ;
For rain and mountain-storms ! the like thou need'st
not fear,
The rain and storm are things that scarcely can
come here.

Rest, little young One, rest ; thou hast forgot the day
When my father found thee first in places far away ;
Many flocks were on the hills, but thou wert owned
by none,
And thy mother from thy side for evermore was
gone.

He took thee in his arms, and in pity brought thee
home :
A blessed day for thee ! then whither wouldest thou
roam ?
A faithful nurse thou hast ; the dam that did thee
yean
Upon the mountain tops no kinder could have been.

Thou know'st that twice a day I have brought thee
in this can
Fresh water from the brook, as clear as ever ran ;
And twice in the day, when the ground is wet with
dew,
I bring thee draughts of milk, warm milk it is and
new.

Thy limbs will shortly be twice as stout as they are now,
Then I'll yoke thee to my cart like a pony in the plough ;
My playmate thou shalt be ; and when the wind is cold
Our hearth shall be thy bed, our house shall be thy fold.

It will not, will not rest !—Poor creature, can it be
That 't is thy mother's heart which is working so in thee ?

Things that I know not of belike to thee are dear,
And dreams of things which thou canst neither see nor hear.

Alas, the mountain-tops that look so green and fair !
I 've heard of fearful winds and darkness that come there ;

The little brooks that seem all pastime and all play,
When they are angry, roar like lions for their prey.

Here thou need'st not dread the raven in the sky ;
Night and day thou art safe,—our cottage is hard by.
Why bleat so after me ? Why pull so at thy chain ?
Sleep—and at break of day I will come to thee again !"

—As homeward through the lane I went with lazy feet,
This song to myself did I oftentimes repeat ;
And it seemed, as I retraced the ballad line by line,
That but half of it was her's, and one half of it was *mine*.

Again, and once again, did I repeat the song ;
 " Nay," said I, " more than half to the damsel must
 belong,
 For she looked with such a look, and she spake
 with such a tone,
 That I almost received her heart into my own."

1800.

SONNET.

WITH Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
 Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed ;
 Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
 Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
 A goodly Vessel did I then espy
 Come like a giant from a haven broad ;
 And lustily along the bay she strode,
 Her tackling rich, and of apparel high.
 This Ship was naught to me, nor I to her,
 Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look ;
 This Ship to all the rest did I prefer :
 When will she turn, and whither ? She will brook
 No tarrying ; where She comes the winds must stir :
 On went She, and due north her journey took.

ODE TO DUTY.

"Jam non consilio bonus, sed more ed perductus, ut non tantum recte
 facere possim, sed nisi recte facere non possim."

STERN Daughter of the voice of God !
 O Duty ! if that name thou love
 Who art a light to guide, a rod
 To check the erring, and reprove ;

Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe ;
From vain temptations dost set free ;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them ; who, in love and truth,
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth :
Glad Hearts ! without reproach or blot ;
Who do thy work, and know it not :
Oh ! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power ! around
them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed ;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried ;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have repos'd my trust :
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray,
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,

I supplicate for thy control ;
But in the quietness of thought ;
Me this unchartered freedom tires ;
I feel the weight of chance-desires :
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face :
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are
fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power !
I call thee : I myself command
Unto thy guidance from this hour ;
Oh, let my weakness have an end !
Give unto me, made lowly wise
The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
The confidence of reason give ;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live !

1805.



GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL.

A TRUE STORY.

O H ! what 's the matter ? what 's the matter ?
What is 't that ails young Harry Gill ?
That evermore his teeth they chatter,
Chatter, chatter, chatter still !

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL. 29

Of waistcoats Harry has no lack,
Good duffel grey, and flannel fine ;
He has a blanket on his back,
And coats enough to smother nine.

In March, December, and in July,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill ;
The neighbors tell, and tell you truly,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
At night, at morning, and at noon,
'Tis all the same with Harry Gill ;
Beneath the sun, beneath the moon,
His teeth they chatter, chatter still !

Young Harry was a lusty drover,
And who so stout of limb as he ?
His cheeks were red as ruddy clover ;
His voice was like the voice of three.
Old Goody Blake was old and poor ;
Ill fed she was, and thinly clad ;
And any man who passed her door
Might see how poor a hut she had.

All day she spun in her poor dwelling :
And then her three hours' work at night,
Alas ! 't was hardly worth the telling,
It would not pay for candle-light.
Remote from sheltered village-green,
On a hill's northern side she dwelt,
Where from sea-blasts the hawthorns lean,
And hoary dews are slow to melt.

By the same fire to boil their pottage,
Two poor old Dames, as I have known,
Will often live in one small cottage ;
But she, poor Woman ! housed alone.

'T was well enough when summer came,
The long, warm, lightsome summer-day,
Then at her door the *canty* Dame
Would sit, as any linnet, gay.

But when the ice our streams did fetter,
Oh then how her old bones would shake !
You would have said, if you had met her,
'T was a hard time for Goody Blake.
Her evenings then were dull and dead :
Sad case it was, as you may think,
For very cold to go to bed ;
And then for cold sleep not a wink.

O joy for her ! whene'er in winter
The winds at night had made a rout ;
And scattered many a lusty splinter
And many a rotten bough about.
Yet never had she, well or sick,
As every man who knew her says,
A pile beforehand, turf or stick,
Enough to warm her for three days.

Now when the frost was past enduring,
And made her poor old bones to ache,
Could anything be more alluring,
Than an old hedge to Goody Blake ?
And, now and then, it must be said,
When her old bones were cold and chill,
She left her fire, or left her bed,
To seek the hedge of Harry Gill.

Now Harry he had long suspected
This trespass of old Goody Blake ;
And vowed that she should be detected—
That he on her would vengeance take.

GOODY BLAKE AND HARRY GILL. 31

And oft from his warm fire he'd go,
And to the fields his road would take ;
And there, at night, in frost and snow,
He watch'd to seize old Goody Blake.

And once, behind a rick of barley,
Thus looking out did Harry stand :
The moon was full and shining clearly,
And crisp with frost the stubble land.
—He hears a noise—he's all awake—
Again?—on tip-toe down the hill
He softly creeps—'t is Goody Blake ;
She's at the hedge of Harry Gill !

Right glad was he when he beheld her :
Stick after stick did Goody pull :
He stood behind a bush of elder,
Till she had filled her apron full.
When with her load she turned about,
The by-way back again to take ;
He started forward, with a shout,
And sprang upon poor Goody Blake.

And fiercely by the arm he took her,
And by the arm he held her fast,
And fiercely by the arm he shook her,
And cried, "I've caught you then at last!"
Then Goody, who had nothing said,
Her bundle from her lap let fall ;
And, kneeling on the sticks, she prayed
To God that is the judge of all.

She prayed, her withered hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm—
"God! who art never out of hearing,
O may he never more be warm!"

The cold, cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray ;
Young Harry heard what she had said :
And icy cold he turned away.

He went complaining all the morrow
That he was cold and very chill ;
His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow,
Alas ! that day for Harry Gill !
That day he wore a riding-coat,
But not a whit the warmer he :
Another was on Thursday brought,
And ere the Sabbath he had three.

'T was all in vain, a useless matter,
And blankets were about him pinned ;
Yet still his jaws and teeth they clatter,
Like a loose casement in the wind.
And Harry's flesh it fell away ;
And all who see him say 't is plain,
That, live as long as live he may,
He never will be warm again.

No word to any man he utters,
A-bed or up, to young or old ;
But ever to himself he mutters,
" Poor Harry Gill is very cold."
A-bed or up, by night or day ;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers, all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill.

WRITTEN AFTER THE DEATH OF
CHARLES LAMB.

TO a good Man of most dear memory
This Stone is sacred. Here he lies apart
From the great city where he first drew breath,
Was reared and taught ; and humbly earned his
bread,
To the strict labors of the merchant's desk
By duty chained. Not seldom did those tasks
Tease, and the thought of time so spent depress,
His spirit, but the recompense was high ;
Firm Independence, Bounty's rightful sire ;
Affections, warm as sunshine, free as air ;
And when the precious hours of leisure came,
Knowledge and wisdom, gained from converse sweet
With books, or while he ranged the crowded streets
With a keen eye, and overflowing heart :
So genius triumphed over seeming wrong,
And poured out truth in works by thoughtful love
Inspired—works potent over smiles and tears.
And as round mountain-tops the lightning plays,
Thus innocently sported, breaking forth
As from a cloud of some grave sympathy,
Humor and wild instinctive wit, and all
The vivid flashes of his spoken words.
From the most gentle creature nursed in fields
Had been derived the name he bore—a name
Wherever Christian altars have been raised,
Hallowed to meekness and to innocence ;
And if in him meekness at times gave way,
Provoked out of herself by troubles strange,
Many and strange, that hung about his life ;
Still, at the centre of his being, lodged

A soul by resignation sanctified ;
And if too often, self-reproached, he felt
That innocence belongs not to our kind,
A power that never ceased to abide in him,
Charity, 'mid the multitude of sins
That she can cover, left not his exposed
To an unforgiving judgment from just Heaven.
O, he was good, if ever a good man liv'd !

* * * *

From a reflecting mind and sorrowing heart
Those simple lines flowed with an earnest wish,
Though but a doubting hope, that they might serve
Fitly to guard the precious dust of him
Whose virtues called them forth. That aim is
missed ;
For much that truth most urgently required
Had from a faltering pen been asked in vain :
Yet, haply, on the printed page received,
The imperfect record, there, may stand unblamed
As long as verse of mine shall breathe the air
Of memory, or see the light of love.

Thou wert a scorner of the fields, my Friend,
But more in show than truth ; and from the fields,
And from the mountains, to thy rural grave
Transported, my soothed spirit hovers o'er
Its green untrodden turf, and blowing flowers ;
And taking up a voice shall speak (though still
Awed by the theme's peculiar sanctity
Which words less free presumed not even to touch)
Of that fraternal love, whose heaven-lit lamp
From infancy, through manhood, to the last
Of threescore years, and to thy latest hour,
Burnt on with ever-strengthening light, enshrined
Within thy bosom.

"Wonderful" hath been

The love established between man and man,
 "Passing the love of women;" and between
 Man and his help-mate in fast wedlock joined
 Through God, is raised a spirit and soul of love
 Without whose blissful influence Paradise
 Had been no Paradise; and earth were now
 A waste where creatures bearing human form,
 Darest of savage beasts, would roam in fear,
 Joyless and comfortless. Our days glide on;
 And let him grieve who cannot choose but grieve
 That he hath been an elm without his Vine,
 And her bright dower of clustering charities
 That, round his trunk and branches, might have
 clung

Enriching and adorning. Unto thee,
 Not so enriched, not so adorned, to thee
 Was given (say rather thou of later birth
 Wert given to her) a Sister—'t is a word
 Timidly uttered, for she *lives*, the meek,
 The self-restraining, and the ever-kind;
 In whom thy reason and intelligent heart
 Found—for all interests, hopes, and tender cares,
 All softening, humanizing, hallowing powers
 Whether withheld, or for her sake unsought—
 More than sufficient recompense!

Her love

(What weakness prompts the voice to tell it here?)
 Was as the love of mothers; and when years,
 Lifting the boy to man's estate, had called
 The long-protected to assume the part
 Of a protector, the first filial tie
 Was undissolved; and, in or out of sight,
 Remained imperishably interwoven

With life itself. Thus, 'mid a shifting world,
Did they together testify of time
And season's difference—a double tree
With two collateral stems sprung from one root;
Such were they—such thro' life they *might have*
been
In union, in partition only such;
Otherwise wrought the will of the Most High;
Yet, thro' all visitations and all trials,
Still they were faithful; like two vessels launched
From the same beach one ocean to explore
With mutual help, and sailing—to their league
True, as inexorable winds, or bars
Floating or fixed of polar ice, allow.

But turn we rather, let my spirit turn
With thine, O silent and invisible Friend!
To those dear intervals, nor rare nor brief,
When reunited, and by choice withdrawn
From miscellaneous converse, ye were taught
That the remembrance of foregone distress,
And the worse fear of future ill (which oft
Doth hang around it, as a sickly child
Upon its mother) may be both alike
Disarmed of power to unsettle present good.
So prized, and things inward and outward held
In such an even balance, that the heart
Acknowledges God's grace, his mercy feels,
And in its depth of gratitude is still.

O gift divine of quiet sequestration!
The hermit, exercised in prayer and praise,
And feeding daily on the hope of heaven,
Is happy in his vow, and fondly cleaves

To life-long singleness ; but happier far
Was to your souls, and, to the thoughts of others,
A thousand times more beautiful appeared
Your *dual* loneliness. The sacred tie
Is broken ; yet why grieve ? for Time but holds
His moiety in trust, till Joy shall lead
To the blest world where parting is unknown.

1826.

THE RAINBOW.

MY heart leaps up when I behold
 A rainbow in the sky :
So was it when my life began ;
So is it now I am a man ;
So be it when I shall grow old,
 Or let me die !
The Child is father of the Man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

1804.

ALICE FELL;
OR, POVERTY.

THE post-boy drove with fierce career,
 For threatening clouds the moon had drowned ;
When, as we hurried on, my ear
Was smitten with a startling sound.

As if the wind blew many ways
I heard the sound,—and more and more ;
It seemed to follow with the chaise,
And still I heard it as before.

At length I to the boy called out ;
He stopped his horses at the word,
But neither cry, nor voice, nor shout,
Nor aught else like it, could be heard.

The boy then smacked his whip, and fast
The horses scampered through the rain ;
But, hearing soon upon the blast
The cry, I bade him halt again.

Forthwith alighting on the ground,
“ Whence comes,” said I, “ this piteous moan ? ”
And there a little Girl I found
Sitting behind the chaise, alone.

“ My cloak ! ” no other word she spake,
But loud and bitterly she wept,
As if her innocent heart would break ;
And down from off her seat she leapt.

“ What ails you, child ? ”—she sobbed, “ Look
here ! ”
I saw it in the wheel entangled,
A weather-beaten rag as e'er
From any garden scare-crow dangled.

There, twisted between nave and spoke
It hung, nor could at once be freed ;
But our joint pains unloosed the cloak,
A miserable rag indeed !

“ And whither are you going, child,
To-night along these lonesome ways ? ”
“ To Durham,” answered she, half-wild—
“ Then come with me into the chaise.”

In sensible to all relief
Sat the poor girl, and forth did send
Sob after sob, as if her grief
Could never, never have an end.

“ My child, in Durham do you dwell ? ”
She checked herself in her distress,
And said, “ My name is Alice Fell ;
I’m fatherless and motherless.

And I to Durham, Sir, belong.”
Again, as if the thought would choke
Her very heart, her grief grew strong ;
And all was for her tattered cloak !

The chaise drove on ; our journey’s end
Was nigh ; and, sitting by my side,
As if she had lost her only friend
She wept, nor would be pacified.

Up to the tavern-door we post ;
Of Alice and her grief I told ;
And I gave money to the host,
To buy a new cloak for the old.

“ And let it be of duffel grey,
As warm a cloak as man can sell ! ”
Proud creature was she the next day,
The little orphan, Alice Fell !

1801.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE:
OR,
THE FATE OF THE NORTONS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

DURING the Summer of 1807, I visited, for the first time, the beautiful country that surrounds Bolton Priory, in Yorkshire; and the Poem of the White Doe, founded upon a Tradition connected with that place, was composed at the close of the same year.

DEDICATION.

In trellised shed with clustering roses gay,
And, MARY! oft beside our blazing fire,
When years of wedded life were as a day
Whose current answers to the heart's desire,
Did we together read in Spenser's Lay
How Una, sad of soul—in sad attire,
The gentle Una, of celestial birth,
To seek her Knight went wandering o'er the earth.

Ah, then, Beloved! pleasing was the smart,
And the tear precious in compassion shed
For Her, who, pierced by sorrow's thrilling dart,
Did meekly bear the pang unmerited;
Meek as that emblem of her lowly heart
The milk-white Lamb which in a line she led,—
And faithful, loyal in her innocence,
Like the brave Lion slain in her defence.

Notes could we hear as of a faery shell
Attuned to words with sacred wisdom fraught;
Free Fancy prised each specious miracle,
And all its finer inspiration caught;
Till by the bosom of our rustic Cell,
We by a lamentable change were taught
That "bliss with mortal Man may not abide;"
How nearly joy and sorrow are allied

For us the stream of fiction ceased to flow,
For us the voice of melody was mute.
—But, as soft gales dissolve the dreary snow,
And give the timid herbage leave to shoot,
Heaven's breathing influence failed not to bestow
A timely promise of unlooked-for fruit,
Fair fruit of pleasure and serene content
From blossoms wild of fancies innocent.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 41

It soothed us—it beguiled us—then, to hear
Once more of troubles wrought by magic spell;
And griefs whose acry motion comes not near
The pangs that tempt the Spirit to rebel:
Then, with mild Una in her sober cheer,
High over hill and low adown the dell
Again we wandered, willing to partake
All that she suffered for her dear Lord's sake.

Then, too, this Song of mine once more could please,
Where anguish, strange as dreams of restless sleep,
Is tempered and allayed by sympathies
Aloft ascending, and descending deep,
Even to the inferior Kinds; whom forest-trees
Protect from beating sunbeams, and the sweep
Of the sharp winds;—fair Creatures!—to whom Heaven
A calm and sinless life, with love, hath given.

This tragic story cheered us; for it speaks
Of female patience winning firm repose;
And, of the recompense that conscience seeks,
A bright, encouraging example shows;
Needful when o'er wide realms the tempest breaks
Needful amid life's ordinary woes;—
Hence, not for them unfitted who would bless
A happy hour with holier happiness.

He serves the Muses erringly and ill,
Whose aim is pleasure light and fugitive:
O, that my mind were equal to fulfil
The comprehensive mandate which they give—
Vain aspiration of an earnest will'
Yet in this moral Strain a power may live,
Beloved Wife! such solace to impart
As it hath yielded to thy tender heart.

BYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,

April 20, 1815.

"Action is transitory—a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle,—this way or that—
'T is done; and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed
Suffering is permanent, obscure, and dark,
And has the nature of infinity.
Yet through that darkness (infinite though it seem
And irremovable) gracious openings lie
By which the soul—with patient steps of thought
Now toiling, wafted now on wings of prayer—
May pass in hope, and, though from mortal bonds
Yet undelivered, rise with sure ascent
Even to the fountain-head of peace divine."

"They that deny a God, destroy Man's nobility: for certainly Man is of kin to the Beast by his Body; and if he be not of kin to God by his Spirit, he is a base ignoble Creature. It destroys likewise Magnanimity, and the raising of humane Nature: for take an example of a Dogg, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on, when he finds himself maintained by a Man, who to him is instead of a God, or Mellor Natura. Which courage is manifestly such, as that Creature without that confidence of a better Nature than his own could never attain. So Man, when he resteth and asureth himself upon Divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith which human Nature in itself could not obtain."—LORD BACON.

CANTO FIRST.

FROM Bolton's old monastic tower
 The bells ring loud with gladsome power ;
 The sun shines bright ; the fields are gay
 With people in their best array
 Of stole and doublet, hood and scarf,
 Along the banks of crystal Wharf,
 Through the Vale retired and lowly,
 Trooping to that summons holy.
 And, up among the moorlands, see
 What sprinklings of blithe company !
 Of lasses and of shepherd grooms,
 That down the steep hills force their way,
 Like cattle through the budded brooms ;
 Path, or no path, what care they ?
 And thus in joyous mood they hie
 To Bolton's mouldering Priory.

What would they there ?—Full fifty years
 That sumptuous Pile, with all its peers,
 Too harshly hath been doomed to taste
 The bitterness of wrong and waste :
 Its courts are ravaged ; but the tower
 Is standing with a voice of power,
 That ancient voice which wont to call
 To mass or some high festival ;

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTSTONE. 43

And in the shattered fabric's heart
Remaineth one protected part ;
A Chapel, like a wild-bird's nest,
Closely empowered and trimly drest ;
And thither young and old repair,
This Sabbath-day for praise and prayer.

Fast the church-yard fills ;—anon
Look again, and they all are gone ;
The cluster round the porch, and the folk
Who sat in the shade of the Prior's Oak !
And scarcely have they disappeared
Ere the prelusive hymn is heard :—
With one consent the people rejoice
Filling the church with a lofty voice
They sing a service which they feel ;
For 't is the sunrise now of zeal ;
Of a pure faith the vernal prime—
In great Eliza's golden time.

A moment ends the fervent din,
And all is hushed, without and within ;
For though the priest, more tranquilly,
Recites the holy liturgy,
The only voice which you can hear,
Is the river murmuring near.
—When soft !—the dusky trees between,
And down the path through the open green,
Where is no living thing to be seen ;
And through yon gateway, where is found,
Beneath the arch with ivy bound,
Free entrance to the church-yard ground —
Comes gliding in with lovely gleam,
Comes gliding in serene and slow,

Soft and silent as a dream,
A solitary Doe!
White she is as lily of June,
And beauteous as the silver moon
When out of sight the clouds are driven
And she is left alone in heaven;
Or like a ship some gentle day
In sunshine sailing far away,
A glittering ship, that hath the plain
Of ocean for her own domain.

Lie silent in your graves, ye dead!
Lie quiet in your church-yard bed!
Ye living, tend your holy cares;
Ye multitudes, pursue your prayers;
And blame not me if my heart and sight
Are occupied with one delight!
'T is a work for Sabbath hours
If I with this bright Creature go;
Whether she be of forest bowers,
From the bowers of earth below;
Or a Spirit for one day given,
A pledge of grace from purest heaven.

What harmonious pensive changes
Wait upon her as she ranges
Round and through this Pile of state
Overthrown and desolate!
Now a step or two her way
Leads through space of open day,
Where the enamor'd sunny light
Brightens her that was so bright;
Now doth a delicate shadow fall,
Falls upon her like a breath,

From some lofty arch or wall,
As she passes underneath :
Now some gloomy nook partakes
Of the glory that she makes,—
High-ribbed vault of stone, or cell,
With perfect cunning framed as well
Of stone, and ivy, and the spread
Of the elder's bushy head ;
Some jealous and forbidding cell,
That doth the living stars repel,
And where no flower hath leave to dwell.

The presence of this wandering Doe
Fills many a damp, obscure, recess
With lustre of a saintly show ;
And, reappearing, she no less
Sheds on the flowers that round her blow
A more than sunny liveliness.
But say, among these holy places,
Which thus assiduously she paces,
Comes she with a votary's task,
Rite to perform, or boon to ask ?
Fair Pilgrim ! harbors she a sense
Of sorrow, or of reverence ?
Can she be grieved for quire or shrine,
Crushed as if by wrath divine ?
For what survives of house where God
Was worshipped, or where Man abode ;
For old magnificence undone ;
Or for the gentler work begun
By Nature, softening and concealing,
And busy with a hand of healing ?
Mourns she for lordly chamber's hearth
That to the sapling ash gives birth ;

For dormitory's length laid bare
Where the wild rose blossoms fair ;
Or altar, whence the cross was rent,
Now rich with mossy ornament ?
—She sees a warrior carved in stone,
Among the thick weeds, stretched alone ;
A warrior, with his shield of pride
Cleaving humbly to his side,
And hands in resignation prest,
Palm to palm, on his tranquil breast ;
As little she regards the sight
As a common creature might :
If she be doomed to inward care,
Or service, it must lie elsewhere.
—But hers are eyes serenely bright,
And on she moves—with pace how light !
Nor spares to stoop her head, and taste
The dewy turf with flowers bestrown ;
And thus she fares, until at last
Beside the ridge of a grassy grave
In quietness she lays her down :
Gentle as a weary wave
Sinks, when the summer breeze hath died,
Against an anchored vessel's side ;
Even so, without distress, doth she
Lie down in peace, and lovingly.

The day is placid in its going,
To a lingering motion bound,
Like the crystal stream now flowing
With its softest summer sound :
So the balmy minutes pass,
While this radiant Creature lies

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTSTONE. 47

Couched upon the dewy grass,
Pensively with downcast eyes.
—But now again the people raise
With awful cheer the voice of praise ;
It is the last, the parting song ;
And from the temple forth they throng,
And quickly spread themselves abroad,
While each pursues his several road.
But some—a variegated band
Of middle-aged, and old, and young,
And little children by the hand
Upon their leading mothers hung—
With mute obeisance gladly paid,
Turn towards the spot, where, full in view,
The white Doe, to her service true,
Her Sabbath couch has made.

It was a solitary mound
Which two spears' length of level ground
Did from all other graves divide ;
As if in some respect of pride ;
Or melancholy's sickly mood,
Still shy of human neighborhood ;
Or guilt, that humbly would express
A penitential loneliness.

“ Look, there she is, my Child ! draw near ;
She fears not, wherefore should we fear ?
She means no harm ;”—but still the Boy,
To whom the words were softly said,
Hung back, and smiled, and blush'd for joy,
A shame-faced blush of glowing-red !
Again the mother whispered low,
“ Now you have seen the famous Doe ;

From Rylstone she hath found her way
Over the hills this Sabbath day ;
Her work, whate'er it be, is done,
And she will depart when we are gone ;
Thus doth she keep, from year to year,
Her Sabbath morning, foul or fair."

Bright was the Creature, as in dreams
The Boy had seen her, yea, more bright ;
But is she truly what she seems ?
He asks with insecure delight,
Asks of himself, and doubts,—and still
The doubt returns against his will :
Though he, and all the standers-by,
Could tell a tragic history
Of facts divulged, wherein appear
Substantial motive, reason clear,
Why thus the milk-white Doe is found
Couchant beside that lonely mound ;
And why she duly loves to pace
The circuit of this hallowed place.
Nor to the Child's inquiring mind
Is such perplexity confined :
For, spite of sober Truth that sees
A world of fixed remembrances
Which to this mystery belong,
If, undeceived, my skill can trace
The characters of every face,
There lack not strange delusion here,
Conjecture vague, and idle fear,
And superstitious fancies strong,
Which do the gentle Creature wrong.

That bearded, staff-supported Sire—
Who in his boyhood often fed

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 49

Full cheerily on convent-bread,
And heard old tales by the convent-fire
And to his grave will go with scars,
Relics of long and distant wars—
That Old Man, studious to expound
The spectacle, is mounting high
To days of dim antiquity ;
When Lady Aäliza mourned
Her Son, and felt in her despair
The pang of unavailing prayer ;
Her Son in Wharf's abysses drowned,
The noble Boy of Egremound.
From which affliction—when the grace
Of God had in her heart found place—
A pious structure, fair to see,
Rose up, this stately Priory !
The Lady's work ;—but now laid low ;
To the grief of her soul that doth come and go,
In the beautiful form of this innocent Doe :
Which, though seemingly doomed in its breast to
sustain
A softened remembrance of sorrow and pain,
Is spotless, and holy, and gentle, and bright:
And glides o'er the earth like an angel of light.

Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door;
And, through the chink in the fractured floor
Look down, and see a grisly sight;
A vault where the bodies are buried upright!
There, face by face, and hand by hand,
The Claphams and Mauleverers stand ;
And in his place, among son and sire,
Is John de Clapham, that fierce Esquire,

A valiant man, and a name of dread
In the ruthless wars of the White and Red;
Who dragged Earl Pembroke from Banbury
church
And smote off his head on the stones of the
porch !
Look down among them, if you dare;
Oft does the White Doe loiter there,
Prying into the darksome rent;
Nor can it be with good intent:
So thinks that Dame of haughty air,
Who hath a Page her book to hold,
And wears a frontlet edged with gold.
Harsh thoughts with her high mood agree—
Who counts among her ancestry
Earl Pembroke, slain so impiously !

That slender Youth, a scholar pale
From Oxford come to his native vale,
He also hath his own conceit :
It is, thinks he, the gracious Fairy,
Who loved the Shepherd-lord to meet
In his wanderings solitary :
Wild notes she in his hearing sang,
A song of Nature's hidden powers ;
That whistled like the wind, and rang
Among the rocks and holly bowers.
'T was said that She all shapes could wear ;
And oftentimes before him stood,
Amid the trees of some thick wood,
In semblance of a lady fair ;
And taught him signs, and showed him sights,
In Craven's dens, on Cumbrian heights ;

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 51

When under cloud of fear he lay,
A shepherd clad in homely grey ;
Nor left him at his later day.
And hence when he, with spear and shield,
Rode full of years to Flodden-field,
His eye could see the hidden spring,
And how the current was to flow ;
The fatal end of Scotland's King,
And all that hopeless overthrow.
But not in wars did he delight,
This Clifford wished for worthier might ;
Nor in broad pomp, or courtly state ;
Him his own thoughts did elevate,—
Most happy in the shy recess
Of Barden's lowly quietness.
And choice of studious friends had he
Of Bolton's dear fraternity ;
Who, standing on this old church tower,
In many a calm propitious hour,
Perused, with him, thy starry sky ;
Or, in their cells, with him did pry
For other lore, by keen desire,
Urged to close toil with chemic fire ;
In quest belike of transmutations
Rich as the mine's most bright creations.
But they and their good works are fled,
And all is now disquieted—
And peace is none, for living or dead !

Ah, pensive Scholar, think not so,
But look again at the radiant Doe !
What quiet watch she seems to keep,
Alone, beside that grassy heap !

Why mention other thoughts unmeet
For vision so composed and sweet?
While stand the people in a ring,
Gazing, doubting, questioning;
Yea, many overcome in spite
Of recollections clear and bright;
Which yet do unto some impart
An undisturbed repose of heart.
And all the assembly own a law
Of orderly respect and awe;
But see—they vanish one by one,
And last, the Doe herself is gone.

Harp! we have been full long beguiled
By vague thoughts, lured by fancies wild;
To which, with no reluctant strings,
Thou hast attuned thy murmurings;
And now before this Pile we stand
In solitude, and utter peace:
But, Harp! thy murmurs may not cease—
A Spirit, with his angelic wings,
In soft and breeze-like visitings,
Has touched thee—and a Spirit's hand;
A voice is with us—a command
To chant, in strains of heavenly glory,
A tale of tears, a mortal story!

CANTO SECOND.

THE Harp in lowliness obeyed;
And first we sang of the green-wood shade
And a solitary Maid;
Beginning, where the song must end,

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 53

With her, and with her sylvan Friend ;
The Friend who stood before her sight,
Her only unextinguished light ;
Her last companion in a dearth
Of love, upon a hopeless earth.

For She it was—this Maid, who wrought
Meekly, with foreboding thought,
In vermeil colors and in gold
An unblest work ; which, standing by,
Her Father did with joy behold,—
Exulting in its imagery ;
A Banner, fashioned to fulfil
Too perfectly his headstrong will :
For on this Banner had her hand
Embroidered (such her Sire's command)
The sacred Cross ; and figured there
The five dear wounds our Lord did bear ;
Full soon to be uplifted high,
And float in rueful company !

It was the time when England's Queen
Twelve years had reigned, a Sovereign dread ;
Nor yet the restless crown had been
Disturbed upon her virgin head ;
But now the inly-working North
Was ripe to send its thousands forth,
A potent vassalage, to fight
In Percy's and in Neville's right,
The two Earls fast leagued in discontent,
Who gave their wishes open vent ;
And boldly urged a general plea
The rites of ancient piety
To be triumphantly restored,
By the stern justice of the sword !

And that same Banner, on whose breast
The blameless Lady had express
Memorials chosen to give life
And sunshine to a dangerous strife ;
That Banner, waiting for the Call,
Stood quietly in Rylstone-hall.

It came ; and Francis Norton said,
“ O Father ! rise not in this fray—
The hairs are white upon your head ;
Dear Father, hear me when I say
It is for you too late a day !
Bethink you of your own good name :
A just and gracious Queen have we,
A pure religion, and the claim
Of peace on our humanity.—
‘T is meet that I endure your scorn ;
I am your son, your eldest born ;
But not for lordship or for land,
My Father, do I clasp your knees ;
The Banner touch not, stay your hand,
This multitude of men disband,
And live at home in blameless ease ;
For these my brethren’s sake, for me ;
And, most of all, for Emily !”

Tumultuous noises filled the hall ;
And scarcely could the Father hear
That name—pronounced with a dying fall—
The name of his only Daughter dear,
As on the banner which stood near
He glanced a look of holy pride,
And his moist eyes were glorified ;
Then did he seize the staff, and say ;

“Thou, Richard, bear’st thy father’s name,
Keep thou this ensign till the day
When I of thee require the same:
Thy place be on my better hand;—
And seven as true as thou, I see,
Will cleave to this good cause and me.”
He spake, and eight brave sons straightway
All followed him, a gallant band !

Thus, with his sons, when forth he came
The sight was hailed with loud acclaim
And din of arms and minstrelsy,
From all his warlike tenantry,
All horsed and harnessed with him to ride,—
A voice to which the hills replied !

But Francis, in the vacant hall,
Stood silent under dreary weight,—
A phantasm, in which roof and wall
Shook, tottered, swam before his sight ;
A phantasm like a dream of night !
Thus overwhelmed, and desolate,
He found his way to a postern-gate ;
And, when he waked, his languid eye
Was on the calm and silent sky ;
With air about him breathing sweet,
And earth’s green grass beneath his feet ;
Nor did he fail ere long to hear
A sound of military cheer,
Faint—but it reached that sheltered spot ;
He heard, and it disturbed him not.

There stood he, leaning on a lance
Which he had grasped unknowingly,

Had blindly grasped in that strong trance,
That dimness of heart-agony ;
There stood he, cleansed from the despair
And sorrow of his fruitless prayer.
The past he calmly hath reviewed ;
But where will be the fortitude
Of this brave man, when he shall see
That Form beneath the spreading tree,
And know that it is Emily ?

He saw her where in open view
She sate beneath the spreading yew—
Her head upon her lap, concealing
In solitude her bitter feeling :
“ Might ever son *command* a sire,
The act were justified to-day.”
This to himself—and to the Maid,
Whom now he had approached, he said—
“ Gone are they,—they have their desire ;
And I with thee one hour will stay,
To give thee comfort if I may.”

She heard, but looked not up, nor spake ;
And sorrow moved him to partake
Her silence ; then his thoughts turned round,
And fervent words a passage found.

“ Gone are they, bravely, though misled ;
With a dear Father at their head !
The Sons obey a natural lord ;
The Father had given solemn word
To noble Percy ; and a force
Still stronger, bends him to his course.
This said, our tears to-day may fall
As at an innocent funeral.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 57

In deep and awful channel runs
This sympathy of Sire and Sons ;
Untried our Brothers have been loved
With heart by simple nature moved ;
And now their faithfulness is proved :
For faithful we must call them, bearing
That soul of conscientious daring.

—There were they all in circle—there
Stood Richard, Ambrose, Christopher,
John with a sword that did not fail,
And Marmaduke in fearless mail,
And those bright Twins were side by side ;
And there, by fresh hopes beautified,
Stood He, whose arm yet lacks the power
Of man, our youngest, fairest flower !
I, by the right of eldest born,
And in a second father's place,
Presumed to grapple with their scorn,
And meet their pity face to face ;
Yea, trusting in God's holy aid,
I to my Father knelt and prayed ;
And one, the pensive Marmaduke,
Methought was yielding inwardly,
And would have laid his purpose by,
But for a glance of his Father's eye,
Which I myself could scarcely brook.

Then be we, each and all, forgiven !
Thou, chiefly thou, my Sister dear,
Whose pangs are registered in Heaven—
The stifled sigh, the hidden tear,
And smiles, that dared to take their place,
Meek filial smiles, upon thy face,

As that unhallowed Banner grew,
Beneath a loving old Man's view.
Thy part is done—thy painful part ;
Be thou then satisfied in heart !
A further, though far easier task
Than thine hath been, my duties ask ;
With theirs my efforts cannot blend,
I cannot for such cause contend ;
Their aims I utterly forswear ;
But I in body will be there.
Unarmed and naked will I go,
Be at their side, come weal or woe :
On kind occasions I may wait,
See, hear, obstruct, or mitigate.
Bare breast I take and an empty hand."—*
Therewith he threw away the lance,
Which he had grasped in that strong trance ;
Spurned it, like something that would stand
Between him and the pure intent
Of love on which his soul was bent.

" For thee, for thee, is left the sense
Of trial past without offence
To God or man; such innocence,
Such consolation, and the excess
Of an unmerited distress ;
In that thy very strength must lie.
O Sister ! I could prophesy !
The time is come that rings the knell
Of all we loved, and loved so well :
Hope nothing, if I thus may speak
To thee, a woman, and thence weak :

* See the Old Ballad,—"The Rising of the North."

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 59

Hope nothing, I repeat ; for we
Are doomed to perish utterly :
'T is meet that thou with me divide
The thought while I am by thy side,
Acknowledging a grace in this,
A comfort in the dark abyss.
But look not for me when I am gone,
And be no farther wrought upon :
Farewell all wishes, all debate,
All prayers for this cause, or for that !
Weep, if that aid thee ; but depend
Upon no help of outward friend ;
Espouse thy doom at once, and cleave
To fortitude without reprieve.
For we must fall, both we and ours—
This Mansion and these pleasant bowers,
Walks, pools, and arbors, homestead, hall—
Our fate is theirs, will reach them all ;
The young horse must forsake his manger,
And learn to glory in a Stranger ;
The hawk forget his perch ; the hound
Be parted from his ancient ground :
The blast will sweep us all away—
One desolation, one decay !
And even this Creature !” which words saying,
He pointed to a lovely Doe,
A few steps distant, feeding, straying ;
Fair creature, and more white than snow !
“ Even she will to her peaceful woods
Return, and to her murmuring floods,
And be in heart and soul the same
She was before she hither came ;
Ere she had learned to love us all,
Herself beloved in Rylstone-hall.

—But thou, my Sister, doomed to be
The last leaf on a blasted tree ;
If not in vain we breathed the breath
Together of a purer faith ;
If hand in hand we have been led,
And thou (O happy thought this day !)
Not seldom foremost in the way ;
If on one thought our minds have fed,
And we have in one meaning read ;
If, when at home our private weal
Hath suffered from the shock of zeal,
Together we have learned to prize
Forbearance and self-sacrifice ;
If we like combatants have fared,
And for this issue been prepared ;
If thou art beautiful, and youth
And thought endue thee with all truth—
Be strong ;—be worthy of the grace
Of God, and fill thy destined place :
A Soul, by force of sorrows high,
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed humanity !”

He ended,—or she heard no more ;
He led her from the yew-tree shade,
And at the mansion's silent door,
He kissed the consecrated Maid ;
And down the valley then pursued,
Alone the armed multitude.

CANTO THIRD.

Now joy for you who from the towers
Of Brancepeth look in doubt and fear,

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTSTONE. 61

Telling melancholy hours!
Proclaim it, let your Masters hear,
That Norton with his band is near!
The watchmen from their station high,
Pronounced the word,—and the Earls descry,
Well-pleased, the armed Company
Marching down the banks of Were.

Said fearless Norton to the pair
Gone forth to greet him on the plain—
“ This meeting, noble Lords ! looks fair,
I bring with me a goodly train ;
Their hearts are with you : hill and dale
Have helped us : Ure we crossed, and Swale,
And horse and harness followed—see
The best part of their Yeomanry !
—Stand forth, my Sons !—these eight are mine,
Whom to this service I commend
Which way soe'er our fate incline,
These will be faithful to the end ;
They are my all ”—voice failed him here—
“ My all, save one, a daughter dear !
Whom I have left, Love’s mildest birth,
The meekest Child on this blessed earth
I had—but these are by my side,
These Eight, and this is a day of pride !
The time is ripe. With festive din
Lo ! how the people are flocking in,—
Like hungry fowl to the feeder’s hand
When snow lies heavy upon the land.”

He spake bare truth ; for far and near
From every side came noisy swarms
Of Peasants in their homely gear ;
And, mixed with these, to Brancepeth came

Grave Gentry of estate and name,
And Captains known for worth in arms ;
And prayed the Earls in self-defence
To rise, and prove their innocence.—
“ Rise, noble Earls, put forth your might
For holy Church and the People's right !”

The Norton fixed, at this demand,
His eye upon Northumberland,
And said ; “ The Minds of Men will own
No loyal rest while England's Crown
Remains without an Heir, the bait
Of strife and factions desperate ;
Who, paying deadly hate in kind
Through all things else, in this can find
A mutual hope, a common mind ;
And plot and pant to overwhelm
All ancient honor in the realm.
—Brave Earls ! to whose heroic veins
Our noblest blood is given in trust,
To you a suffering State complains,
And ye must raise her from the dust.
With wishes of still bolder scope
On you we look, with dearest hope ;
Even for our Altars—for the prize
In Heaven of life that never dies ;
For the old and holy Church we mourn,
And must in joy to her return.
Behold !”—and from his Son whose stand
Was on his right, from that guardian hand
He took the Banner, and unfurled
The precious folds—“ behold,” said he,
“ The ransom of a sinful world ;
Let this your preservation be ;

The wounds of hands and feet and side,
And the sacred Cross on which Jesus died !
—This bring I from an ancient hearth,
These Records wrought in pledge of love
By hands of no ignoble birth,
A Maid o'er whom the blessed Dove
Vouchsafed in gentleness to brood
While she the holy work pursued.”
“Uplift the Standard!” was the cry
From all the listeners that stood round,
“Plant it,—by this we live or die.”
The Norton ceased not for that sound,
But said ; “The prayer which ye have heard,
Much injured Earls ! by these preferred,
Is offered to the Saints, the sigh
Of tens of thousands, secretly.”
“Uplift it!” cried once more the Band,
And then a thoughtful pause ensued.
“Uplift it!” said Northumberland—
Whereat, from all the multitude
Who saw the Banner reared on high
In all its dread emblazonry,
A voice of uttermost joy brake out :
The transport was rolled down the river of Were,
And Durham, the time-honored Durham, did
hear,
And the towers of Saint Cuthbert were stirred
by the shout !

Now was the North in arms :—they shine
In warlike trim from Tweed to Tyne,
At Percy’s voice : and Neville sees
His followers gathering in from Tees,

From Were, and all the little rills
Concealed among the forked hills—
Seven hundred Knights, Retainers all
Of Neville, at their Master's call
Had sate together in Raby Hall !
Such strength that Earldom held of yore ;
Nor wanted at this time rich store
Of well-appointed chivalry.

—Not loth the sleepy lance to wield,
And greet the old paternal shield,
They heard the summons ;—and, furthermore,
Horsemen and Foot of each degree,
Unbound by pledge of fealty,
Appeared, with free and open hate
Of novelties in Church and State ;
Knight, burgher, yeoman, and esquire :
And Romish priest, in priest's attire.
And thus, in arms, a zealous Band
Proceeding under joint command,
To Durham first their course they bear ;
And in Saint Cuthbert's ancient seat
Sang mass,—and tore the book of prayer,—
And trod the Bible beneath their feet.

Thence marching southward smooth and free
“ They mustered their host at Wetherby,
Full sixteen thousand fair to see ;”*
The Choicest Warriors of the North !
But none for beauty and for worth
Like those eight Sons—who, in a ring
(Ripe men, or blooming in life's spring)
Each with a lance, erect and tall,
A falchion, and a buckler small,

* From the Old Ballad.

Stood by their Sire, on Clifford-moor,
To guard the Standard which he bore.
On foot they girt their Father round ;
And so will keep the appointed ground
Where'er their march : no steed will he
Henceforth bestride ;—triumphantly,
He stands upon the grassy sod,
Trusting himself to the earth, and God.
Rare sight to embolden and inspire !
Proud was the field of Sons and Sire ;
Of him the most ; and, sooth to say,
No shape of man in all the array
So graced the sunshine of that day.
The monumental pomp of age
Was with this goodly Personage ;
A stature undepressed in size,
Unbent, which rather seemed to rise,
In open victory o'er the weight
Of seventy years, to loftier height ;
Magnific limbs of withered state :
A face to fear and venerate ;
Eyes dark and strong ; and on his head
Bright locks of silver hair, thick spread,
Which a brown morion half-concealed,
Light as a hunter's of the field ;
And thus, with girdle round his waist,
Whereon the Banner-staff might rest
At need, he stood, advancing high
The glittering, floating Pageantry.

Who sees him ?—thousands see, and One
With unparticipated gaze ;
Who, 'mong those thousands, friend hath none,
And treads in solitary ways.

He, following wheresoe'er he might,
Hath watched the Banner from afar,
As shepherds watch a lonely star,
Or mariners the distant light
That guides them through a stormy night.
And now, upon a chosen plot
Of rising ground, yon heathy spot!
He takes alone his far-off stand,
With breast unmailed, unweaponed hand.
Bold is his aspect; but his eye
Is pregnant with anxiety,
While, like a tutelary Power,
He there stands fixed from hour to hour:
Yet sometimes in more humble guise,
Upon the turf-clad height he lies
Stretched, herdsman-like, as if to bask
In sunshine were his only task,
Or, by his mantle's help to find
A shelter from the nipping wind:
And thus, with short oblivion, blest,
His weary spirits gather rest.
Again he lifts his eyes; and lo!
The pageant glancing to and fro;
And hope is wakened by the sight,
He thence may learn, ere fall of night,
Which way the tide is doomed to flow.

To London were the Chieftains bent;
But what avails the bold intent?
A Royal army is gone forth
To quell the RISING OF THE NORTH;
They march with Dudley at their head,
And in seven days' space, will to York be led!—

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 67

Can such a mighty Host be raised
Thus suddenly, and brought so near ?
The Earls upon each other gazed,
And Neville's cheek grew pale with fear ;
For, with a high and valiant name
He bore a heart of timid frame ;
And bold if both had been, yet they
“ Against so many may not stay.”*
Back therefore will they hie to seize
A strong Hold on the banks of Tees ;
There wait a favorable hour,
Until Lord Dacre with his power
From Naworth come ; and Howard's aid
Be with them openly displayed.

While through the Host, from man to man,
A rumor of this purpose ran,
The Standard trusting to the care
Of him who heretofore did bear
That charge, impatient Norton sought
The Chieftains to unfold his thought,
And thus abruptly spake ;—“ We yield
(And can it be ?) an unsought field !—
How oft has strength, the strength of heaven,
To few triumphantly been given !
Still do our very children boast
Of mitred Thurston—what a Host
He conquered !—Saw we not the Plain
(And flying shall behold again)
Where faith was proved ?—while to battle moved
The Standard, on the Sacred Wain
That bore it, compassed round by a bold
Fraternity of Barons old :

* From the old Ballad.

And with those grey-haired champions stood,
Under the saintly ensigns three,
The infant Heir of Mowbray's blood—
All confident of victory !—
Shall Percy blush, then, for his name ?
Must Westmoreland be asked with shame
Whose were the numbers, where the loss,
In that other day of Neville's Cross ?
When the Prior of Durham with holy hand,
Raised, as the Vision gave command,
Saint Cuthbert's Relic—far and near
Kenned on the point of a lofty spear ;
While the Monks prayed in Maiden's Bower
To God descending in his power.
Less would not at our need be due
To us, who war against the Untrue,
The delegates of Heaven we rise,
Convoked the impious to chastise :
We, we, the sanctities of old ;
Would re-establish and uphold :
Be warned"—His zeal the Chiefs confounded,
But word was given, and the trumpet sounded :
Back through the melancholy Host,
Went Norton, and resumed his post.
Alas ! thought he, and have I borne,
This Banner raised with joyful pride,
This hope of all posterity,
By those dread symbols sanctified ;
Thus to become at once the scorn
Of babbling winds as they go by,
A spot of shame to the sun's bright eye,
To the light clouds a mockery !
—"Even these poor eight of mine would stem—" "
Half to himself, and half to them

He spake—"would stem, or quell, a force
Ten times their number, man and horse ;
This by their own unaided might,
Without their father in their sight,
Without the Cause for which they fight ;
A Cause, which on a needful day
Would breed us thousands brave as they."

—So speaking, he his reverend head
Raised towards that Imagery once more :
But the familiar prospect shed
Despondency unfelt before :
A shock of intimations vain,
Dismay, and superstitious pain,
Fell on him, with the sudden thought
Of her by whom the work was wrought :—
Oh wherefore was her countenance bright
With love divine and gentle light ?
She would not, could not, disobey,
But her Faith leaned another way.
Ill tears she wept ; I saw them fall,
I overheard her as she spake
Sad words to that mute Animal,
The White Doe in the hawthorn brake ;
She steeped, but not for Jeau's sake,
This Cross in tears : by her, and One
Unworthier far we are undone,
Her recreant Brother—he prevailed
Over that tender Spirit—assailed
Too oft, alas ! by her whose head
In the cold grave hath long been laid :
She first, in reason's dawn beguiled
Her docile, unsuspecting Child :
Far back—far back my mind must go
To reach the well-spring of this woe !

While thus he brooded, music sweet
Of border tunes was played to cheer
The footsteps of a quick retreat;
But Norton lingered in the rear,
Stung with sharp thoughts; and ere the last
From his distracted brain was cast,
Before his Father, Francis stood,
And spake in firm and earnest mood.

"Though here I bend a suppliant knee
In reverence, and unarmed, I bear
In your indignant thoughts my share;
Am grieved this backward march to see
So careless and disorderly.
I scorn your Chiefs—men who would lead,
And yet want courage at their need:
Then look at them with open eyes!
Deserve they further sacrifice?—
If—when they shrink, nor dare oppose
In open field their gathering foes
(And fast, from this decisive day,
Yon multitude must pass away);
If now I ask a grace not claimed
While ground was left for hope; unblamed
Be an endeavor that can do
No injury to them or you.
My Father! I would help to find
A place of shelter, till the rage
Of cruel men do like the wind
Exhaust itself and sink to rest;
Be Brother now to Brother joined!
Admit me in the equipage
Of your misfortunes, that at least,
Whatever fate remain behind,

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSSTONE. 71

I may bear witness in my breast
To your nobility of mind!"

"Thou Enemy, my bane and blight!
Oh! bold to fight the Coward's fight
Against all good"—but why declare,
At length, the issue of a prayer
Which love had prompted, yielding scope
Too free to one bright moment's hope ?
Suffice it that the Son, who strove
With fruitless effort to allay
That passion, prudently gave way :
Nor did he turn aside to prove
His Brothers' wisdom or their love—
But calmly from the spot withdrew ;
His best endeavors to renew,
Should e'er a kindlier time ensue.

CANTO FOURTH.

'T is night: in silence looking down,
The Moon, from cloudless ether, sees
A Camp, and a beleaguered Town,
And Castle like a stately crown
On the steep rocks of winding Tees ;—
And southward far, with moor between,
Hill-top, and flood, and forest green,
The bright Moon sees that valley small
Where Rylstone's old sequestered Hall
A venerable image yields
Of quiet to the neighboring fields ;
While from one pillared chimney breathes
The smoke, and mounts in silver wreaths.

—The courts are hushed ;—for timely sleep
The greyhounds to their kennel creep ;
The peacock in the broad ash tree
Aloft is roosted for the night,
He who in proud prosperity
Of colors manifold and bright
Walked round, affronting the day-light ;
And higher still, above the bower
Where he is perched, from yon lone Tower
The hall-clock in the clear moonshine
With glittering finger points at nine.

Ah ! who could think that sadness here
Hath any sway ? or pain, or fear ?
A soft and lulling sound is heard
Of streams inaudible by day ;
The garden pool's dark surface, stirred
By the night insects in their play,
Breaks into dimples small and bright ;
A thousand, thousand rings of light
That shape themselves and disappear
Almost as soon as seen :—and lo !
Not distant far, the milk-white Doe—
The same who quietly was feeding
On the green herb, and nothing heeding,
When Francis, uttering to the Maid
His last words in the yew-tree shade,
Involved whate'er by love was brought
Out of his heart, or crossed his thought,
Or chance presented to his eye,
In one sad sweep of destiny—
The same fair Creature, who hath found
Her way into forbidden ground ;

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 73

Where now—within this spacious plot
For pleasure made, a goodly spot,
With lawns and beds of flowers, and shades
Of trellis-work in long arcades,
And cirque and crescent framed by wall
Of close-clipt foliage green and tall,
Converging walks, and fountains gay,
And terraces in trim array—
Beneath yon cypress spiring high,
With pine and cedar spreading wide,
Their darksome boughs on either side,
In open moonlight doth she lie ;
Happy as others of her kind,
That, far from human neighborhood,
Range unrestricted as the wind,
Through park, or chase, or savage wood.

But see the consecrated Maid
Emerging from a cedar shade
To open moonshine, where the Doe
Beneath the cypress-spire is laid ;
Like a patch of April snow—
Upon a bed of herbage green,
Lingering in a woody glade
Or behind a rocky screen—
Lonely relic ! which, if seen
By the shepherd, is passed by
With an inattentive eye.
Nor more regard doth She bestow
Upon the uncomplaining Doe
Now couched at ease, though oft this day
Not unperplexed nor free from pain,
When she had tried, and tried in vain,
Approaching in her gentle way,

To win some look of love, or gain
Encouragement to sport or play ;
Attempts at which the heart-sick Maid
Rejected, or with slight repaid.

Yet Emily is soothed ;—the breeze
Came fraught with kindly sympathies.
As she approached yon rustic Shed
Hung with late-flowering woodbine, spread
Along the walls and overhead,
The fragrance of the breathing flowers
Revived a memory of those hours
When here, in this remote alcove
(While from the pendent woodbine came
Like odors, sweet as if the same),
A fondly-anxious Mother strove
To teach her salutary fears
And mysteries above her yeats.
Yes, she is soothed : an Image faint,
And yet not faint—a presence bright
Returns to her—that blessed Saint
Who with mild looks and language mild
Instructed here her darling Child,
While yet a prattler on the knee,
To worship in simplicity
The invisible God, and take for guide
The faith reformed and purified.

'T is flown—the Vision, and the sense
Of that beguiling influence ;
“ But oh ! thou Angel from above,
Mute Spirit of maternal love,
That stood'st before my eyes, more clear

Than ghosts are fabled to appear
 Sent upon embassies of fear ;
 As thou thy presence hast to me
 Vouchsafed, in radiant ministry
 Descend on Francis ; nor forbear
 To greet him with a voice, and say :—
 ‘ If hope be a rejected stay,
 Do thou, my Christian Son, beware
 Of that most lamentable snare,
 The self-reliance of despair ! ’ ”

Then from within the embowered retreat
 Where she had found a grateful seat
 Perturbed she issues. She will go !
 Herself will follow to the war,
 And clasp her Father’s knees ;—ah, no !
 She meets the insuperable bar,
 The injunction by her Brother laid ;
 His parting charge—but ill obeyed—
 That interdicted all debate,
 All prayer for this cause or for that ;
 All efforts that would turn aside
 The headstrong current of their fate :
Her duty is to stand and wait ;
 In resignation to abide
 The shock, AND FINALLY SECURE
 O’ER PAIN AND GRIEF A TRIUMPH PURE.
 —She feels it, and her pangs are checked.
 But now, as silently she paced
 The turf, and thought by thought was chased,
 Came one who, with sedate respect,
 Approached, and, greeting her, thus spake :
 “ An old man’s privilege I take :

Dark is the time—a woeful day !
Dear daughter of affliction, say
How can I serve you ? point the way.”

“ Rights have you, and may well be bold :
You with my Father have grown old
In friendship—strive—for his sake go—
Turn from us all the coming woe :
This would I beg ; but on my mind
A passive stillness is enjoined.
On you, if room for mortal aid
Be left, is no restriction laid ;
You not forbidden to recline
With hope upon the Will divine.”

“ Hope,” said the old man, “ must abide
With all of us, whate’er betide.
In Craven’s Wilds is many a den,
To shelter persecuted men :
Far under ground is many a cave,
Where they might lie as in the grave,
Until this storm hath ceased to rave :
Or let them cross the River Tweed,
And be at once from peril freed !”

“ Ah tempt me not !” she faintly sighed ;
“ I will not counsel nor exhort,
With my condition satisfied ;
But you, at least, may make report
Of what befals ;—be this your task—
This may be done ;—’t is all I ask !”

She spake—and from the Lady’s sight
The Sire, unconscious of his age,
Departed promptly as a Page

Bound on some errand of delight.
—The noble Francis—wise as brave,
Thought he, may want not skill to save.
With hopes in tenderness concealed,
Unarmed he followed to the field ;
Him will I seek : the insurgent Powers
Are now besieging Barnard's Towers,—
“ Grant that the Moon which shines this night
May guide them in a prudent flight !”

But quick the turns of chance and change,
And knowledge has a narrow range ;
Whence idle fears, and needless pain,
And wishes blind, and efforts vain.—
The Moon may shine, but cannot be
Their guide in flight—already she
Hath witnessed their captivity.
She saw the desperate assault
Upon that hostile castle made ;—
But dark and dismal is the vault
Where Norton and his sons are laid !
Disastrous issue !—he had said
“ This night yon faithless Towers must yield,
Or we for ever quit the field.
—Neville is utterly dismayed,
For promise fails of Howard's aid ;
And Dacre to our call replies
That *he* is unprepared to rise.
My heart is sick ;—this weary pause
Must needs be fatal to our cause.
The breach is open—on the wall
This night, the Banner shall be planted !”
‘T was done : his Sons were with him—all ;
They belt him round with hearts undaunted

And others follow; Sire and Son
Leap down into the court;—"T is won"—
They shout aloud—but Heaven decreed
That with their joyful shout should close
The triumph of a desperate deed
Which struck with terror friends and foes!
The friend shrinks back—the foe recoils
From Norton and his filial band;
But they, now caught within the toils,
Against a thousand cannot stand;
The foe from numbers courage drew,
And overpowered that gallant few.
"A rescue for the Standard!" cried
The Father from within the walls;
But, see, the sacred Standard falls!—
Confusion through the Camp spread wide:
Some fled: and some their fears detained:
But ere the Moon had sunk to rest
In her pale chambers of the west,
Of that rash levy naught remained.

CANTO FIFTH.

HIGH on a point of rugged ground
Among the wastes of Rylstone Fell
Above the loftiest ridge or mound
Where foresters or shepherds dwell,
An edifice of warlike frame
Stands single,—Norton Tower its name—
It fronts all quarters, and looks round
O'er path and road, and plain and dell,
Dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream
Upon a prospect without bound.

The summit of this bold ascent—
Though bleak and bare, and seldom free,
As Pendle-hill or Pennygent
From wind, or frost, or vapors wet—
Had often heard the sound of glee
When there the youthful Nortons met,
To practise games and archery :
How proud and happy they ! the crowd
Of lookers-on how pleased and proud !
And from the scorching noon-tide sun,
From showers, or when the prize was won,
They to the Tower withdrew, and there
Would mirth run round, with generous fare ;
And the stern old Lord of Rylstone-hall,
Was happiest, proudest of them all.

But now, his Child, with anguish pale,
Upon the height walks to and fro ;
'T is well that she hath heard the tale,
Received the bitterness of woe ;
For she *had* hoped, had hoped and feared,
Such rights did feeble nature claim ;
And oft her steps had hither steered,
Though not unconscious of self-blame ;
For she her brother's charge revered,
His farewell words ; and by the same,
Yea by her brother's very name,
Had, in her solitude, been cheered.

Beside the lonely watch-tower stood
That grey-haired man of gentle blood,
Who with her Father had grown old
In friendship ; rival hunters they
And fellow-warriors in their day ;

To Rylstone he the tidings brought;
Then on this height the maid he sought,
And, gently as he could, had told
The end of that dire Tragedy,
Which it had been his lot to see.

To him the lady turned ; " You said
That Francis lives, *he* is not dead ? "

" Your noble brother hath been spared ,
To take his life they have not dared ;
On him and on his high endeavor
The light of praise shall shine for ever !
Nor did he (such Heaven's will) in vain
His solitary course maintain ;
Not vainly struggled in the might
Of duty, seeing with clear sight ;
He was their comfort to the last ,
Their joy till every pang was past .

I witnessed when to York they came—
What, Lady, if their feet were tied ;
They might deserve a good Man's blame ;
But marks of infamy and shame—
These were their triumph, these their pride
Nor wanted 'mid the pressing crowd
Deep feeling, that found utterance loud,
'Lo, Francis comes,' there were who cried,
'A Prisoner once, but now set free !'
'T is well, for he the worst defied
Through force of natural piety ;
He rose not in this quarrel, he,
For concord's sake and England's good,
Suit to his Brothers often made

With tears, and of his Father prayed—
And when he had in vain withstood
Their purpose—then did he divide,
He parted from them ; but at their side
Now walks in unanimity.
Then peace to cruelty and scorn,
While to the prison they are borne,
Peace, peace to all indignity !'

And so in Prison were they laid—
Oh hear me, hear me, gentle Maid,
For I am come with power to bless,
By scattering gleams, through your distress,
Of a redeeming happiness.
Me did a reverent pity move
And privilege of ancient love ;
And, in your service, making bold,
Entrance I gained to that strong-hold.

Your Father gave me cordial greeting ;
But to his purposes, that burned
Within him, instantly returned :
He was commanding and entreating,
And said, ‘ We need not stop, my son !
Thoughts press, and time is hurrying on ’—
And so to Francis he renewed
His words, more calmly thus pursued.

‘ Might this our enterprise have sped,
Change wide and deep the Land had seen,
A renovation from the dead,
A spring-tide of immortal green :
The darksome altars would have blazed
Like stars when clouds are rolled away ;

Salvation to all eyes that gazed,
Once more the Rood had been upraised
To spread its arms and stand for aye.
Then, then—had I survived to see
New life in Bolton Priory ;
The voice restored, the eye of Truth
Re-opened that inspired my youth ;
To see her in her pomp arrayed—
This Banner (for such vow I made)
Should on the consecrated breast
Of that same Temple have found rest :
I would myself have hung it high,
Fit offering of glad victory !

A shadow of such thought remains
To cheer this sad and pensive time .
A solemn fancy yet sustains
One feeble Being—bids me climb
Even to the last—one effort more
To attest my Faith, if not restore.

Hear then,' said he, ' while I impart,
My Son, the last wish of my heart.
The Banner strive thou to regain ;
And, if the endeavor prove not vain,
Bear it—to whom if not to thee
Shall I this lonely thought consign ?—
Bear it to Bolton Priory,
And lay it on Saint Mary's shrine :
To wither in the sun and breeze
'Mid those decaying sanctities.
There let at least the gift be laid,
The testimony there displayed ;

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE. 83

Bold proof that with no selfish aim,
But for lost Faith and Christ's dear name
I helmeted a brow though white,
And took a place in all men's sight ;
Yea offered up this noble Brood,
This fair unrivalled Brotherhood,
And turned away from thee, my Son !
And left—but be the rest unsaid,
The name untouched, the tear unshed ;—
My wish is known, and I have done :
Now promise, grant this one request,
This dying prayer, and be thou blest !

Then Francis answered—‘ Trust thy Son,
For, with God's will, it shall be done !’—

The pledge obtained, the solemn word
Thus scarcely given, a noise was heard,
And Officers appeared in state
To lead the prisoners to their fate.
They rose, oh ! wherefore should I fear
To tell, or, Lady, you to hear ?
They rose—embraces none were given—
They stood like trees when earth and heaven
Are calm : they knew each other's worth,
And reverently the Band went forth.
They met, when they had reached the door,
One with profane and harsh intent
Placed there—that he might go before,
And, with that rueful Banner borne
Aloft in sign of taunting scorn,
Conduct them to their punishment :
So cruel Sussex, unrestrained
By human feeling, had ordained.

The unhappy Banner Francis saw,
And, with a look of calm command
Inspiring universal awe,
He took it from the soldier's hand ;
And all the people that stood round
Confirmed the deed in peace profound.
—High transport did the Father shed
Upon his Son—and they were led,
Led on, and yielded up their breath ;
Together died, a happy death !—
But Francis, soon as he had braved
That insult, and the Banner saved,
Athwart the unresisting tide
Of the spectators occupied
In admiration or dismay,
Bore instantly his charge away."

These things, which thus had in the sight
And hearing passed of Him who stood
With Emily, on the Watch-tower height,
In Rylstone's woeful neighborhood,
He told ; and oftentimes with voice
Of power to comfort or rejoice ;
For deepest sorrows that aspire,
Go high, no transport ever higher.
“ Yes—God is rich in mercy,” said
The old Man to the silent Maid,
“ Yet, Lady ! shines through this black night,
One star of aspect heavenly bright ;
Your brother lives—he lives—is come
Perhaps already to his home ;
Then let us leave this dreary place.”
She yielded, and with gentle pace,

Though without one uplifted look,
To Rylstone-hall her way she took.

CANTO SIXTH.

WHY comes not Francis?—From the doleful City
He fled,—and, in his flight, could hear
The death-sounds of the Minster-bell:
That sullen stroke pronounced farewell
To Marmaduke, cut off from pity!
To Ambrose that! and then a knell
For him, the sweet half-opened Flower!
For all—all dying in one hour!

—Why comes not Francis? Thoughts of love
Should bear him to his Sister dear
With the fleet motion of a dove;
Yea, like a heavenly messenger
Of speediest wing, should he appear.
Why comes he not?—for westward fast
Along the plain of York he past;
Reckless of what impels or leads,
Unchecked he hurries on;—nor heeds
The sorrow, through the Villages,
Spread by triumphant cruelties
Of vengeful military force,
And punishment without remorse.
He marked not, heard not, as he fled;
All but the suffering heart was dead
For him abandoned to blank awe,
To vacancy, and horror strong;
And the first object which he saw,
With conscious sight, as he swept along—
It was the Banner in his hand!
He felt—and made a sudden stand.

He looked about like one betrayed :
What hath he done ? what promise made ?
Oh weak, weak moment ! to what end
Can such a vain oblation tend,
And he the Bearer ?—Can he go
Carrying this instrument of woe,
And find, find anywhere, a right
To excuse him in his Country's sight ?
No ; will not all men deem the change
A downward course, perverse and strange ?
Here is it ;—but how ? when ? must she,
The unoffending Emily,
Again this piteous object see ?

Such conflict long did he maintain,
Nor liberty nor rest could gain :
His own life into danger brought
By this sad burden—even that thought,
Exciting self-suspicion strong
Swayed the brave man to his wrong.
And how—unless it were the sense
Of all-disposing Providence,
Its will unquestionably shown—
How has the Banner clung so fast
To a palsied and unconscious hand ;
Clung to the hand to which it passed
Without impediment ? And why
But that Heaven's purpose might be known,
Doth now no hindrance meet his eye,
No intervention, to withstand
Fulfilment of a Father's prayer
Breathed to a Son forgiven, and blest
When all resentments were at rest,
And life in death laid the heart bare ?—

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 87

Then, like a spectre sweeping by,
Rushed through his mind the prophecy
Of utter desolation made
To Emily, in the yew-tree shade:
He sighed, submitting will and power
To the stern embrace of that grasping hour.
“ No choice is left, the deed is mine—
Dead, are they, dead !—and I will go,
And, for their sakes, come weal or woe,
Will lay the Relic on the shrine.”

So forward with a steady will
He went, and traversed plain and hill ;
And up the vale of Wharf his way
Pursued ; and, at the dawn of day,
Attained a summit whence his eyes
Could see the Tower of Bolton rise.
There Francis for a moment's space
Made halt—but hark ! a noise behind
Of horsemen at an eager pace !
He heard, and with misgiving mind.
—'T is Sir George Bowes who leads the Band :
They come, by cruel Sussex sent ;
Who, when the Mortons from the hand
Of death had drunk their punishment,
Bethought him, angry and ashamed,
How Francis, with the Banner claimed
As his own charge, had disappeared,
By all the standers-by revered.
His whole bold carriage (which had quelled
Thus far the Opposer, and repelled
All censure, enterprise so bright
That even bad men had vainly striven

Against that overcoming light)
Was then reviewed, and prompt word given,
That to what place soever fled
He should be seized, alive or dead.

The troop of horse have gained the height
Where Francis stood in open sight.
They hem him round—“Behold the proof,”
They cried, “the Ensign in his hand!
He did not arm, he walked aloof!
For why?—to save his Father’s land;—
Worst Traitor of them all is he,
A Traitor dark and cowardly!”

“I am no Traitor,” Francis said,
“Though this unhappy freight I bear;
And must not part with. But beware;—
Err not, by hasty zeal misled,
Nor do a suffering Spirit wrong,
Whose self-reproaches are too strong!”
At this he from the beaten road
Retreated towards a brake of thorn,
That like a place of vantage showed;
And there stood bravely, though forlorn.
In self-defence with warlike brow
He stood,—nor weaponless was now;
He from a Soldier’s hand had snatched
A spear,—and, so protected, watched
The Assailants, turning round and round;
But from behind with treacherous wound
A Spearman brought him to the ground.
The guardian lance, as Francis fell,
Dropped from him; but his other hand
The Banner clenched; till, from out the Band,

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 89

One, the most eager for the prize,
Rushed in ; and—while, O grief to tell !
A glimmering sense still left, with eyes
Unclosed the noble Francis lay—
Seized it, as hauters seize their prey ;
But not before the warm life-blood
Had tinged more deeply, as it flowed,
The wounds the broidered Bauner showed,
Thy fatal work, O Maiden, innocent as good.

Proudly the Horsemen bore away
The Standard ; and where Francis lay
There was he left alone, unwept,
And for two days unnoticed slept.
For at that time bewildering fear
Possessed the country, far and near ;
But, on the third day, passing by
One of the Norton Tenantry
Espied the uncovered Corse ; the Man
Shrunk as he recognised the face,
And to the nearest homesteads ran
And called the people to the place.
—How desolate is Rylstone-hall !
This was the instant thought of all ;
And if the lonely Lady there
Should be ; to her they cannot bear
This weight of anguish and despair.
So, when upon sad thoughts had prest
Thoughts sadder still, they deemed it best
That, if the priest should yield assent
And no one hinder their intent,
Then, they, for Christian pity's sake,
In holy ground a grave would make ;

And straightway buried he should be
In the Church-yard of the Priory.

Apart, some little space, was made
The grave where Francis must be laid.
In no confusion or neglect
This did they,—but in pure respect
That he was born of gentle blood ;
And that there was no neighborhood
Of kindred for him in that ground :
So to the Church-yard they are bound,
Bearing the body on a bier ;
And psalms they sing—a holy sound
That hill and vale with sadness hear.

But Emily hath raised her head,
And is again disquieted ;
She must behold ! so many gone,
Where is the solitary One ?
And forth from Rylstone-hall stepped she,—
To seek her Brother forth she went,
And tremblingly her course she bent
Toward Bolton's ruined Priory.
She comes, and in the vale hath heard
The funeral dirge ; she sees the knot
Of people, sees them in one spot—
And darting like a wounded bird
She reached the grave, and with her breast
Upon the ground received the rest,—
The consummation, the whole ruth
And sorrow of this final truth !

CANTO SEVENTH.

"Powers there are
That touch each other to the quick—in modes
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,
No soul to dream of!"

Thou Spirit, whose angelic hand
Was to the harp a strong command,
Called the submissive strings to wake
In glory for this Maiden's sake,
Say, Spirit! whither hath she fled
To hide her poor afflicted head?
What mighty forest in its gloom
Enfolds her?—is a rifted tomb
Within the wilderness her seat?
Some island which the wild waves beat—
Is that the Sufferer's last retreat?
Or some aspiring rock, that shrouds
Its perilous front in mists and clouds?
High-climbing rock, low sunless dale,
Sea, desert, what do these avail?
Oh take her anguish and her fears
Into a deep recess of years!

'Tis done;—despoil and desolation
O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown;
Pools, terraces, and walks are sown
With weeds; the bowers are overthrown,
Or have given way to slow mutation,
While, in their ancient habitation
The Norton name hath been unknown.
The lordly Mansion of its pride
Is stripped; the ravage hath spread wide
Through park and field, a perishing
That mocks the gladness of the Spring!

And, with this silent gloom agreeing,
Appears a joyless human Being,
Of aspect such as if the waste
Were under her dominion placed.
Upon a primrose bank, her throne
Of quietness, she sits alone ;
Among the ruins of a wood,
Erewhile a covert bright and green,
And where full many a brave tree stood,
That used to spread its boughs, and ring
With the sweet birds' carolling.
Behold her, like a virgin Queen,
Neglecting in imperial state
These outward images of fate,
And carrying inward a serene
And perfect sway, through many a thought
Of chance and change, that hath been brought
To the subjection of a holy,
Though stern and rigorous melancholy !
The like authority, with grace
Of awfulness, is in her face,—
There hath she fixed it ; yet it seems
To o'ershadow by no native right
That face, which cannot lose the gleams,
Lose utterly the tender gleams,
Of gentleness and meek delight,
And loving-kindness ever bright :
Such is her sovereign mien :—her dress
(A vest with woollen cincture tied,
A hood of mountain-wool undyed)
Is homely,—fashioned to express
A wandering Pilgrim's humbleness.

And she *hath* wandered, long and far,
Beneath the light of sun and star ;

Hath roamed in trouble and in grief,
Driven forward like a withered leaf,
Yea like a ship at random blown
To distant places and unknown.
But now she dares to seek a haven
Among her native wilds of Craven ;
Hath seen again her Father's roof,
And put her fortitude to proof ;
The mighty sorrow hath been borne,
And she is thoroughly forlorn :
Her soul doth in itself stand fast,
Sustained by memory of the past
And strength of Reason ; held above
The infirmities of mortal love ;
Undaunted, lofty, calm, and stable,
And awfully impenetrable.

And so—beneath a mouldered tree,
A self-surviving leafless oak
By unregarded age from stroke
Of ravage saved—sate Emily.
There did she rest, with head reclined,
Herself most like a stately flower
(Such have I seen) whom chance of birth
Hath separated from its kind,
To live and die in a shady bower,
Single on the gladsome earth.

When, with a noise like distant thunder,
A troop of deer came sweeping by ;
And, suddenly, behold a wonder !
For One, among those rushing deer,
A single One, in mid career
Hath stopped, and fixed her large full eye
Upon the Lady Emily :

A doe most beautiful, clear-white,
A radiant creature, silver-bright!

Thus checked, a little while it stayed;
A little thoughtful pause it made;
And then advanced with stealth-like pace,
Drew softly near her, and more near—
Looked round—but saw no cause for fear;
So to her feet the Creature came,
And laid its head upon her knee,
And looked into the Lady's face,
A look of pure benignity,
And fond unclouded memory.
It is, thought Emily, the same,
The very Doe of other years!—
The pleading look the Lady viewed,
And, by her gushing thoughts subdued,
She melted into tears.—
A flood of tears, that flowed apace,
Upon the happy Creature's face.

Oh, moment ever blest! O Pair
Beloved of Heaven, Heaven's chosen care,
This was for you a precious greeting;
And may it prove a fruitful meeting!
Joined are they, and the sylvan Doe
Can she depart? can she forego
The Lady, once her playful peer,
And now her sainted Mistress dear?
And will not Emily receive
This lovely chronicler of things
Long past, delights and sorrowings?
Lone Sufferer! will not she believe
The promise in that speaking face;

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 95

And welcome, as a gift of grace,
The saddest thou ht the Creature brings ?

That day, the first of a re-union
Which was to teem with high communion,
That day of balmy April weather,
They tarried in the wood together.
And when, ere fall of evening dew,
She from her sylvan haunt withdrew,
The White Doe tracked with faithful pace
The Lady to her dwelling-place ;
That nook where, on paternal ground,
A habitation she had found,
The Master of whose humble board
Once owned her Father for his Lord ;
A hut, by tufted trees defended,
Where Rylstone brook with Wharf is blended.

When Emily by morning light
Went forth, the Doe stood there in sight.
She shrunk :—with one frail shoc of pain
Received and followed by a prayer,
She saw the Creature once again ;
Shun will she not, she feels, will bear ;—
But, wheresoever she looked round,
All now was trouble-haunted ground ;
And therefore now she deems it good
Once more this restless neighborhood
To leave.—Unwooed, yet unforbidden,
The White Doe followed up the vale,
Up to another cottage, hidden
In the deep fork of Amerdale ;
And there may Emily restore
Herself, in spots unseen before.

—Why tell of mossy rock, or tree,
By lurking Dernbrook's pathless side,
Haunts of a strengthening amity
That calmed her, cheered, and fortified ?
For she hath ventured now to read
Of time, and place, and thought, and deed—
Endless history that lies
In her silent Follower's eyes ;
Who with a power like human reason
Discerns the favorable season,
Skilled to approach or to retire,
From looks conceiving her desire ;
From look, deportment, voice, or mien,
That vary to the heart within.
If she too passionately wreathed
Her arms, or over-deeply breathed,
Walked quick, or slowly, every mood
In its degree was understood ;
Then well may their accord be true,
And kindliest intercourse ensue.
—Oh ! surely 't was a gentle rousing
When she by sudden glimpse espied
The White Doe on the mountain browsing,
Or in the meadow wandered wide !
How pleased, when down the straggler sank
Beside her, on some sunny bank !
How soothed, when in thick bower enclosed,
They, like a nested pair, reposed !
Fair Vision ! when it crossed the Maid
Within some rocky cavern laid,
The dark cave's portal gliding by,
White as whitest cloud on high
Floating through the azure sky.

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 97

—What now is left for pain or fear?
That Presence, dearer and more dear,
While they, side by side, were straying,
And the shepherd's pipe was playing,
Did now a very gladness yield
At morning to the dewy field,
And with a deeper peace endued
The hour of moonlight solitude.

With her Companion, in such frame
Of mind, to Rylstone back she came ;
And, ranging through the wasted groves,
Received the memory of old loves,
Undisturbed and undistrest,
Into a soul which now was blest
With a soft spring-day of holy,
Mild, and grateful melancholy :
Not sunless gloom or unenlightened,
But by tender fancies brightened.

When the bells of Rylstone played
Their Sabbath music—" *God us aye!*"
That was the sound they seemed to speak ;
Inscriptive legend which I ween
May on those holy bells be seen,
That legend and her Grandsire's name ;
And oftentimes the Lady meek
Had in her childhood read the same ;
Words which she slighted at that day ;
But now, when such sad change was wrought,
And of that lonely name she thought,
The bells of Rylstone seemed to say,
While she sate listening in the shade,
With vocal music, " *God us aye;*"

And all the hills were glad to bear
Their part in this effectual prayer.

Nor lacked she Reason's firmest power ;
But with the White Doe at her side
Up would she climb to Norton Tower,
And thence look round her far and wide,
Her fate there measuring ;—all is stilled,—
The weak One hath subdued her heart ;
Behold the prophecy fulfilled,
Fulfilled, and she sustains her part !
But here her Brother's words have failed ;
Here hath a milder doom prevailed ;
That she, of him and all bereft,
Hath yet this faithful Partner left ;
This one Associate that disproves
His words, remains for her, and loves.
If tears are shed, they do not fall
For loss of him—for one, or all ;
Yet, sometimes, sometimes doth she weep
Moved gently in her soul's soft sleep ;
A few tears down her cheek descend
For this her last and living Friend.

Bless, tender Hearts, their mutual lot,
And bless for both this savage spot ;
Which Emily doth sacred hold
For reasons dear and manifold—
Here hath she, here before her sight,
Close to the summit of this height,
The grassy rock-encircled Pound
In which the Creature first was found.
So beautiful the timid Thrall
(A spotless Youngling white as foam)

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLTONE. 88

Her youngest Brother brought it home.
The youngest, then a lusty boy,
Bore it, or led, to Rylstone-hall
With heart brimful of pride and joy!

But most to Bolton's sacred Pile,
On favoring nights, she loved to go;
There ranged through cloister, court, and aisle,
Attended by the soft-paced Doe;
Nor feared she in the still moonshine
To look upon Saint Mary's shrine;
Nor on the lonely turf that showed
Where Francis slept in his last abode.
For that she came; there oft she sate
Forlorn, but not disconsolate:
And, when she from the abyss returned
Of thought, she neither shrunk nor mourned:
Was happy that she lived to greet
Her mute Companion as it lay
In love and pity at her feet;
How happy in its turn to meet
The recognition! the mild glance
Beamed from that gracious countenance;
Communication, like the ray
Of a new morning, to the nature
And prospects of the inferior Creature!

A mortal Song we sing, by dower
Encouraged of celestial power;
Power which the viewless Spirit shed
By whom we were first visited;
Whose voice we heard, whose hand and wings
Swept like a breeze the conscious strings,
When, left in solitude, erewhile
We stood before this ruined Pile,

And, quitting unsubstantial dreams,
Sang in this Presence kindred themes ;
Distress and desolation spread
Through human hearts, and pleasure dead,—
Dead—but to live again on earth,
A second and yet nobler birth ;
Dire overthrow, and yet how high
The re-ascent in sanctity !
From fair to fairer ; day by day
A more divine and loftier way !
Even such this blessed Pilgrim trod,
By sorrow lifted towards her God ;
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed mortality.
Her own thoughts loved she ; and could bend
A dear look to her lowly friend ;
There stopped ; her thirst was satisfied
With what this innocent spring supplied.
Her sanction inwardly she bore,
And stood apart from human cares :
But to the world returned no more,
Although with no unwilling mind
Help did she give at need, and joined
The Wharfdale peasants in their prayers.
At length, thus faintly, faintly tied,
To earth, she was set free, and died.
Thy soul, exalted Emily,
Maid of the blasted family,
Rose to the God from whom it came,
—In Rylstone Church her mortal frame
Was buried by her Mother's side.

Most glorious sunset ! and a ray
Survives—the twilight of this day—

THE WHITE DOE OF RYLSSTONE. 101

In that fair Creature whom the fields
Support, and whom the forest shields ;
Who, having filled a holy place,
Partakes, in her degree, Heaven's grace ;
And bears a memory and a mind
Raised far above the law of kind ;
Haunting the spots with lonely cheer
Which her dear mistress once held dear :
Loves most what Emily loved most—
The enclosure of this church-yard ground ;
Here wanders like a gliding ghost,
And every Sabbath here is found ;
Comes with the people when the bells
Are heard among the moorland dells,
Finds entrance through yon arch, where way
Lies open on the Sabbath-day ;
Here walks amid the mournful waste
Of prostrate altars, shrines defaced,
And floors encumbered with rich show
Of fret-work imagery laid low ;
Paces softly, or makes halt,
By fractured cell, or tomb, or vault ;
By plate of monumental brass
Dim-gleaming among weeds and grass,
And sculptured Forms of warriors brave :
But chiefly by that single grave,
That one sequestered hillock green,
The pensive visitant is seen.
There doth the gentle Creature lie
With those adversities unmoved ;
Calm spectacle, by earth and sky
In their benignity approved !
And aye, methinks, this hoary Pile,
Subdued by outrage and decay,

Looks down upon her with a smile,
 A gracious smile, that seems to say—
 “Thou, thou art not a Child of Time,
 But Daughter of the Eternal Prime.”

SONNET.

SCORN not the Sonnet ; Critic, you have frowned,
 Mindless of its just honors ; with this key
 Shakspeare unlocked his heart ; the melody
 Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound ;
 A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound ;
 With it Camoëns soothed an exile's grief ;
 The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
 Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
 His visionary brow ; a glow-worm lamp,
 It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
 To struggle through dark ways ; and, when a damp
 Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
 The Thing became a trumpet ; whence he blew
 Soul-animating strains—alas, too few !

WE ARE SEVEN.

A SIMPLE Child,
 That lightly draws its breath,
 And feels its life in every limb,
 What should it know of death ?

I met a little cottage Girl :
She was eight years old, she said ;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad :
Her eyes were fair, and very fair ;
—Her beauty made me glad.

“ Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
“ How many may you be ? ”
“ How many ? Seven in all,” she said,
And wondering looked at me.

“ And where are they ? I pray you tell.”
She answered, “ Seven are we ;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

Two of us in the church-yard lie,
My sister and my brother ;
And, in the church-yard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.”

“ You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven ! —I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.”

Then did the little Maid reply,
“ Seven boys and girls are we ;
Two of us in the church-yard lie,
Beneath the church-yard tree.”

" You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive ;
If two are in the church-yard laid,
Then ye are only five."

" Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,
" Twelve steps or more from my mother's
door,
And they are side by side.

My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem ;
And there upon the ground I sit,
And sing a song to them.

And often after sun-set, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

The first that died was sister Jane ;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain ;
And then she went away.

So in the church-yard she was laid :
And, when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played,
My brother John and I.

And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

" How many are you, then," said I,
" If they two are in heaven ?"
Quick was the little Maid's reply,
" O Master ! we are seven."

" But they are dead ; those two are dead !
Their spirits are in heaven !"
'T was throwing words away : for still
The little Maid would have her will
And said, " Nay, we are seven !"

1798.

LUCY.

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love.

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye !
—Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be ;
But she is in her grave, and oh,
The difference to me !

1798.

MICHAEL.

A PASTORAL POEM.

IF from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle ; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage ! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen ; but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and kites
That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude ;
Nor should I have made mention of this Dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones !
And to that simple object appertains
A story—unenriched with strange events,
Yet not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of Shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved ;—not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this Tale, while I was yet a Boy,
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of Nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects, led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think

(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts ;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful Poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

UPON the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a Shepherd, Michael was his name ;
An old man, stout of heart and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength : his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone ; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, He heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The Shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
" The winds are now devising work for me !"
And, truly, at all times, the storm, that drives
The traveller to a shelter, summoned him
Up to the mountains ; he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him, and left him, on the heights.
So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the Shepherd's thoughts.

Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had breathed
The common air ; hills, which with vigorous step
He had so often climbed ; which had imprest
So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;
Which, like a book, preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts
The certainty of honorable gain ;
Those fields, those hills—what could they less ?
had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His Helpmate was a comely Matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house ; two wheels she had
Of antique form ; this large, for spinning wool ;
That small, for flax ; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.
The Pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only Child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only Son
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a storm,
The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors

The Son and Father were come home, even then,
Their labor did not cease ; unless when all
Turned to the cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed milk,
Sat round the basket piled with oatmeal cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when the
meal

Was ended, Luke (for so the Son was named)
And his old Father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fire-side ; perhaps to card
Wool for the Housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling, by the chimney's edge,
That in our ancient uncouth country style
With huge and black projection overbrowed
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the Housewife hung a lamp ;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn—and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which, going by from year to year, had found,
And left the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.
And now when Luke had reached his eighteenth
year,

There by the light of this old lamp they sate,
Father and Son, while far into the night
The Housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours

Murmur as with the sound of summer-flies.
This light was famous in its neighborhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
That thrifty Pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and south,
High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake ;
And from this constant light, so regular,
And so far seen, the House itself, by all
Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The Shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his Helpmate ; but to Michael's heart
This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Fond spirit that blindly works in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts
That earth can offer to declining man,
Brings hope with it, and forward-looking thoughts,
And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy ! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness ; and he had rocked
His cradle, as with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the Boy
Had put on Boy's attire, did Michael love,

Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the Young-one in his sight, when he
Wrought in the field, or on his shepherd's stool
Sate with a fettered sheep before him stretched
Under the large old oak, that near his door
Stood single, and, from matchless depth of shade,
Chosen for the Shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE,* a name which yet it bears.
There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the Child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy grew
up
A healthy Lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old ;
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the Boy ; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed
At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock ;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help ;
And for this cause not always, I believe,
Receiving from his Father hire of praise ;

* Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

Though naught was left undone which staff, or voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures, could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could stand
Against the mountain blasts ; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his Father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the Shepherd loved before
Were dearer now ? that from the Boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind ;
And that the old Man's heart seemed born again ?

Thus in his Father's sight the Boy grew up ;
And now, when he had reached his eighteenth year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound
In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means ;
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him ; and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for claim,
At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had armed himself with strength
To look his trouble in the face, it seemed
The Shepherd's sole resource to sell at once

A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve ; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived ; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot ; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I ;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man .
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us ; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this
Had been no sorrow. I forgive him ;—but
'T were better to be dumb than to talk thus.

When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel ; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free ;
He shall possess it, free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou know'st,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
He may return to us. If here he stay,
What can be done ? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained ?"

At this the old Man paused,
And Isabel sat silent, for her mind

Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbors bought
A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And, with this basket on his arm, the lad
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who, out of many, chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas; where he grew wondrous rich,
And left estates and moneys to the poor,
And, at his birth-place, built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old Man was glad,
And thus resumed:—"Well, Isabel! this scheme
These two days, has been meat and drink to me.
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.
—We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger;—but this hope is a good hope.
—Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night.
—If he could go, the Boy should go to-night."

Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went forth
With a light heart. The Housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work: for, when she lay

By Michael's side, she through the last two nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep :
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves
Were sitting at the door, " Thou must not go :
We have no other Child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy Father he will die."
The Youth made answer with a jocund voice ;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work ;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in Spring ; at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the Boy ;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over ; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbors round ;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old Man said,
" He shall depart to-morrow." To this word,
The Housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,
In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a Sheep-fold; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked:
And soon as he had reached the place he stopped,
And thus the old Man spake to him:—" My Son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories; 't will do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should touch
On things thou canst not know of.—After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy Father's tongue
Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fire-side
First uttering, without words, a natural tune;
While thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy Mother's breast. Month followed month,
And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mount'rs; else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy Father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke: among these hills,
As well thou knowest, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou

Lack any pleasure which a boy can know.”
Luke had a manly heart : but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old Man grasped his hand,
And said, “ Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
—Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good Father : and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others’ hands ; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together : here they lived,
As all their Forefathers had done ; and when
At length their time was come, they were not loth
To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they lived :
But, ’t is a long time to look back, my Son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burdened when they came to me ;
Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled ; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
—It looks as if it never could endure
Another Master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou should’st go.”

At this the old Man paused ;
Then, pointing to the stones near which they stood,
Thus, after a short silence, he resumed :
“ This was a work for us ; and now, my Son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own hands.
Nay, Boy, be of good hope ;—we both may live

To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale;—do thou thy part;
I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!
Thy heart these two weeks has been beating fast
With many hopes; it should be so—yes—yes—
I knew that thou could'st never have a wish
To leave me, Luke: thou hast been bound to me
Only by links of love: when thou art gone.
What will be left to us!—But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my Son,
And of this moment; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee: amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
May'st bear in mind the life thy Fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee well—
When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here: a covenant
'T will be between us; but, whatever fate
Befal thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The Shepherd ended here; and Luke stooped
down,
And, as his Father had requested, laid
The first stone of the Sheep-fold. At the sight

The old Man's grief broke from him : to his heart
He pressed his Son : he kissed him and wept ;
And to the house together they returned.

—Hushed was the House in peace, or seeming peace,
Ere the night fell :—with morrow's dawn the Boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face ;
And all the neighbors, as he passed their doors,
Came forth with wishes, and with farewell prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their Kinsman come
Of Luke and his well-doing ; and the Boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the Housewife phrased it, were through-
out

“ The prettiest letters that were ever seen ! ”
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on : and once again
The Shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts ; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the Sheep-fold. Meantime Luke began
To slacken in his duty ; and, at length,
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses : ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love ;
'T will make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart ;
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old Man, and what he was

Years after he had heard this heavy news.
 His bodily frame had been from youth to age
 Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
 He went, and still looked up to sun and cloud,
 And listened to the wind ; and, as before,
 Performed all kinds of labor for his sheep,
 And for the land, his small inheritance.
 And to that hollow dell from time to time
 Did he repair, to build the Fold of which
 His flock had need. 'T is not forgotten yet
 The pity which was then in every heart
 For the old Man—and 't is believed by all
 That many and many a day he thither went,
 And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the Sheep-fold, sometimes was he seen
 Sitting alone, or with his faithful Dog,
 Then old, beside him, lying at his feet,
 The length of full seven years, from time to time,
 He at the building of this Sheep-fold wrought,
 And left the work unfinished when he died.
 Three years, or little more, did Isabel
 Survive her Husband : at her death the estate
 Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.
 The Cottage which was named the EVENING STAR
 Is gone—the ploughshare has been through the
 ground
 On which it stood ; great changes have been wrought
 In all the neighborhood : yet the oak is left
 That grew beside their door ; and the remains
 Of the unfinished Sheep-fold may be seen
 Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head Ghyll.

1800.

TO THE DAISY.

"Her* divine skill taught me this,
 That from every thing I saw
 I could some instruction draw,
 And raise pleasure to the height
 Through the meanest object's sight.
 By the murmur of a spring,
 Or the least bough's rustelling;
 By a Daisy whose leaves spread
 Shut when Titan goes to bed;
 Or a shady bush or tree;
 She could more infuse in me
 Than all Nature's beauties can
 In some other wiser man."

G. WITHERS.

TN youth from rock to rock I went,
 From hill to hill in discontent
 Of pleasure high and turbulent,
 Most pleased when most uneasy;
 But now my own delights I make,—
 My thirst at every rill can slake,
 And gladly Nature's love partake,
 Of Thee, sweet Daisy!

Thee Winter in the garland wears
 That thinly decks his few grey hairs;
 Spring parts the clouds with softest airs
 That she may sun thee;
 Whole Summer-fields are thine by right;
 And Autumn, melancholy Wight!
 Doth in thy crimson head delight
 When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
 Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane;
 Pleased at his greeting thee again;
 Yet nothing daunted,

* His muse.

Nor grieved if thou be set at naught :
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
When such are wanted.

Be violets in their secret mews
The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose ;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
 Her head impearling ;
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame ;
Thou art indeed by many a claim
 The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
 Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare ;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art !—a friend at hand, to scare
 His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
 Some apprehension ;
Some steady love ; some brief delight ;
Some memory that had taken flight ;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right ;
 Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to Thee should turn,

I drink out of an humbler urn
A lowlier pleasure;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life, our nature breeds;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh-emitted by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,
Then, cheerful Flower! my spirits play
With kindred gladness:
And when, at dusk, by dews opprest
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing;
An instinct call it; a blind sense;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
Nor whither going.

Child of the Year! that round dost run
Thy pleasant course,—when day's begun
As ready to salute the sun
As lark or leveret,
Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain;
Nor be less dear to future men
Than in old time;—thou not in vain
Art Nature's favorite.*

* See, in Chaucer and the elder Poets, the honors formerly paid to this flower.

SONNET.

— “they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.”

THOSE words were uttered as in pensive mood
We turned, departing from that solemn sight:
A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life's unspiritual pleasures daily wooed !
But now upon this thought I cannot brood ;
It is unstable as a dream of night ;
Nor will I praise a cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.
Grove, isle, with every shape of sky-built dome,
Though clad in colors beautiful and pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home ;
The immortal Mind craves objects that endure :
These cleave to it ; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it : their fellowship is secure.

SHE WAS A PHANTOM.

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight.
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament ;
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair ;
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair ;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn ;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too !

Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty ;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food ;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine ;
A Being breathing thoughtful Breath,
A Traveller between life and death ;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill ;
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command :
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

ODE.

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

The Child is Father of the Man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

See page 37.

I.

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and
stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream,

11*

It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—
 Turn wheresoe'er I may,
 By night or day,
 The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II.

The Rainbow comes and goes,
 And lovely is the rose,
 The Moon doth with delight
 Look round her when the heavens are bare,
 Waters on a starry night
 Are beautiful and fair;
 The sunshine is a glorious birth,
 But yet I know, where'er I go,
 That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
 And while the young lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound,
 To me alone there came a thought of grief ;
 A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
 And I again am strong :
 The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep ;
 No more shall grief of mine the season wrong ;
 I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
 The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
 And all the earth is gay ;
 Land and sea
 Give themselves up to jollity
 And with the heart of May
 Doth every Beast keep holiday ;—
 Thou Child of Joy,
 Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
 Shepherd-boy !

IV.

Ye blessed Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make ; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee ;
My heart is at your festival,
 My head hath its coronal.
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
 Oh evil day ! if I were sullen
 While Earth herself is adorning
 This sweet May-morning,
 And the Children are culling
 On every side,
 In a thousand valleys far and wide,
 Fresh flowers ; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm :
 I hear, I hear, with joy I hear !
 —But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone ;
 The Pansy at my feet
 Doth the same tale repeat :
Whither is fled the visionary gleam ?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream ?

V.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,
 And cometh from afar :
 Not in entire forgetfulness,
 And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
 From God who is our home :
Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
Shades of the prison-house begin to close

Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
 He sees it in his joy ;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
 Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
 And by the vision splendid
 Is on his way attended ;
At length the Man perceives it die away
And fade into the light of common day.

VI.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size !
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes !
See at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art ;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral ;
 And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song :
Then will he fit his tongue

To dialogues of business, love, or strife ;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part ;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage ;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

VIII.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity ;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet ! Seer blest !
 On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by ;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife ?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life !

IX.

O joy ! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive !

The thought of our past years in me doth breed,
Perpetual benediction : not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest ;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast :

Not for these I raise

The song of thanks and praise ;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings ;
Blank misgivings of a Creature

Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised :

But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,

Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing ;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make

Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence ; truths that wake
To perish never ;

Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy !

Hence in a season of calm weather

Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea,
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X.

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song !
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound !
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May !
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower ;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind ;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be ;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering ;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI.

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves !
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might ;
I only have relinquished one delight

To live beneath your more habitual sway.
 I loved the Brooks which down their channels fret,
 Even more than when I tripped lightly as they ;
 The innocent brightness of a new-born Day

Is lovely yet ;

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
 Do take a sober coloring from an eye
 That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality ;
 Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
 Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
 Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
 To me the meanest flower that blows can give
 Thoughts that too often lie too deep for tears.

1803-6.

LINES

ON THE DEPARTURE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT FROM ABBOTSFORD, FOR NAPLES.

A TROUBLE, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
 Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
 Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height :
 Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
 For kindred Power departing from their sight ;
 While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blithe
 strain,
 Saddens his voice again, and yet again.
 Lift up your hearts, ye mourners ! for the might
 Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes ;
 Blessings and prayers in nobler retinue
 Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,
 Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
 Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
 Wafting your Charge to soft Parthenope !

HART-LEAP WELL.

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond, in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable Chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second Part of the following Poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

THE Knight had ridden down from Wensley Moor
With the slow motion of a summer's cloud,
And now, as he approached a vassal's door,
"Bring forth another horse!" he cried aloud.

"Another horse!"—That shout the vassal heard
And saddled his best Steed, a comely grey;
Sir Walter mounted him; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair;
But, though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's Hall,
That as they galloped made the echoes roar;
But horse and man are vanished, one and all;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain:
Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The Knight hallooed, he cheered and chid them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraiding stern;
But breath and eyesight fail; and, one by one,
The dogs are stretched among the mountain fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race ?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown ?
—This chase it looks not like an earthly chase ;
Sir Walter and the Hart are left alone.

The poor Hart toils along the mountain-side ;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled,
Nor will I mention by what death he died ;
But now the Knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting, then, he leaned against a thorn ;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy :
He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat ;
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned ;
And white with foam as if with cleaving sleet.

Upon his side the Hart was lying stretched :
His nostril touched a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had fetched
The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Never had living man such joyful lot !)
Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and west,
And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least
Four rods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter found
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted Beast
Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, "Till now
Such sight was never seen by human eyes;
Three leaps have borne him from his lofty brow,
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small arbor, made for rural joy;
'T will be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy

A cunning artist will I have to frame
A basin for the fountain in the dell!
And they who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth, shall call it HART-LEAP WELL.

And, gallant Stag! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have grazed.

And, in the summer-time, when days are long,
I will come hither with my Paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

Till the foundations of the mountains fail
My mansion with its arbor shall endure;—
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure!"

Then home he went, and left the Hart, stone-dead,
With breathless nostrils stretched above the spring
—Soon did the Knight perform what he had said;
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.

Ere thrice the Moon into her port had steered,
A cup of stone received the living well;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were intertwined,—
Which soon composed a little sylvan hall
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter led his wondering Paramour;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The Knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART SECOND.

THE moving accident is not my trade;
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:
'T is my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspens at three corners of a square;
And one, not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine:
And, pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,—
The last stone-pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head ;
Half wasted the square mound of tawny green ;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
“ Here in old time the hand of man hath been.”

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey ;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
And Nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one, who was in shepherd’s garb attired,
Came up the hollow :—him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquired.

The Shepherd stopped, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
“ A jolly place,” said he, “ in times of old !
But something ails it now ; the spot is curst.

You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
These were the bower ; and here a mansion stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms !

The arbor does its own condition tell ;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream !
But as to the great Lodge ! you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

There ’s neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone ;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

Some say that here a murder has been done,
 And blood cries out for blood : but, for my part,
 I 've guessed, when I 've been sitting in the sun,
 That it was all for that unhappy Hart.

What thoughts must through the creature's brain
 have past !

Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
 Are but three bounds—and look, Sir, at this last—
 O Master ! it has been a cruel leap !

For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race ;
 And in my simple mind we cannot tell
 What cause the Hart might have to love this place,
 And come and make his death-bed near the well.

Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
 Lulled by the fountain in the summer tide ;
 This water was perhaps the first he drank
 When he had wandered from his mother's side !

In April here beneath the flowering thorn
 He heard the birds their morning carols sing ;
 And he perhaps, for aught we know, was born
 Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade ;
 The sun on drearier hollow never shone ;
 So will it be, as I have often said,
 Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are gone."

" Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well ;
 Small difference lies between thy creed and mine ;
 This Beast not unobserved by Nature, fell ;
 His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom he loves.

The pleasure-house is dust :—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom ;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be known ;
But at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

One lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what conceals ;
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.”

1900.

SONNET.—NOVEMBER FIRST.

HOW clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from yon distant mountain's head,
Which, strewn with snow smooth as the sky can shed,
Shines like another sun—on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread,
If so he might, yon mountain's glittering head—
Terrestrial, but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing,
Unswept, unstained ? nor shall the aerial Powers
Dissolve that beauty, destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes, till genial Spring
Has filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers.

THE AFFLICION OF MARGARET.—

I.

WHERE art thou, my beloved Son,
 Where art thou, worse to me than dead ?
 Oh, find me, prosperous or undone !
 Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
 Why am I ignorant of the same ?
 That I may rest ; and neither blame
 Nor sorrow may attend thy name ?

II.

Seven years, alas ! to have received
 No tidings of an only child ;
 To have despaired, have hoped, believed.
 And been for evermore beguiled ;
 Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss !
 I catch at them, and then I miss :—
 Was ever darkness like to this ?

III.

He was among the prime in worth,
 An object beauteous to behold ;
 Well born, well bred ; I sent him forth
 Ingenuous, innocent, and bold :
 If things ensued that wanted grace,
 As hath been said, they were not base :
 And never blush was on my face.

IV.

Ah ! little doth the young-one dream,
 When full of play and childish cares,
 What power is in his wildest scream,
 Heard by his mother unawares !

AFFLICITION OF MARGARET. 141

He knows it not, he cannot guess :
Years to a mother bring distress ;
But do not make her love the less.

V.

Neglect me! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought ; and, being blind,
Said, ‘Pride shall help me in my wrong :
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed :’ and that is true ;
I’ve wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI.

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honor and of gain,
Oh ! do not dread thy mother’s door ;
Think not of me with grief and pain :
I now can see with better eyes ;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII.

Alas ! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight.
They mount—how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight !
Chains tie us down by land and sea ;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

VIII.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men ;
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion’s den ;

Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou and all thy mates, to keep
An incomunicable sleep.

IX.

I look for ghosts ; but none will force
Their way to me ; 'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Between the living and the dead ;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

X.

My apprehensions come in crowds ;
I dread the rustling of the grass ;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass :
I question things and do not find
One that will answer to my mind ;
And all the world appears unkind.

XI.

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief :
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me, and not my grief.
Then come to me, my Son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end ;
I have no other earthly friend !

LINES,

WRITTEN WHILE SAILING IN A BOAT AT EVENING.

HOW richly glows the water's breast
Before us tinged with evening hues,
While, facing thus the crimson west,
The boat her silent course pursues !
And see how dark the backward stream !
A little moment past so smiling !
And still, perhaps, with faithless gleam,
Some other loiterers beguiling.

Such views the youthful Bard allure ;
But, heedless of the following gloom,
He deems their colors shall endure
Till peace go with him to the tomb.
—And let him nurse his fond deceit,
And what if he must die in sorrow !
Who would not cherish dreams so sweet,
Though grief and pain may come to-morrow ?

1789.

—
ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS.

'Retine vim istam, false enim dicam, si cogea.'—EUSEBIUS.

IHAVE a boy of five years old ;
His face is fair and fresh to see ;
His limbs are cast in beauty's mould,
And dearly he loves me.

One morn we strolled on our dry walk,
Our quiet home all full in view,
And held such intermitted talk
As we are wont to do.

My thoughts on former pleasures ran ;
I thought of Kilve's delightful shore,
Our pleasant home when spring began,
A long, long year before.

A day it was when I could bear
Some fond regrets to entertain ;
With so much happiness to spare,
I could not feel a pain.

The green earth echoed to the feet
Of lambs that bounded through the glade,
From shade to sunshine, and as fleet
From sunshine back to shade.

Birds warbled round me—and each trace
Of inward sadness had its charm ;
Kilve, thought I, was a favored place,
And so is Liswyn farm.

My boy beside me tripped, so slim
And graceful in his rustic dress !
And, as we talked, I questioned him,
In very idleness.

" Now tell me, had you rather be,"
I said, and took him by the arm,
" On Kilve's smooth shore, by the green sea,
Or here at Liswyn farm ?"

In careless mood he looked at me,
While still I held him by the arm,
And said, " At Kilve I 'd rather be,
Than here at Liswyn farm."

ANECDOTE FOR FATHERS. 145

"Now, little Edward, say why so :
My little Edward, tell me why?"—
"I cannot tell, I do not know."—
"Why, this is strange," said I;

"For, here are woods, hills smooth and warm :
There surely must some reason be
Why you would change sweet Liswyn farm
For Kilve by the green sea."

At this, my boy hung down his head,
He blushed with shame, nor made reply ;
And three times to the child I said,
"Why, Edward, tell me why?"

His head he raised—there was in sight,
It caught his eye, he saw it plain—
Upon the house-top, glittering bright,
A broad and gilded vane.

Then did the boy his tongue unlock,
And eased his mind with this reply :
"At Kilve there was no weather-cock ;
And that's the reason why."

O dearest, dearest boy! my heart
For better lore would seldom yearn,
Could I but teach the hundredth part
Of what from thee I learn.

1798.

THE NORMAN BOY.

HIGH on a broad unfertile tract of forest-skirted
Down,
Nor kept by Nature for herself, nor made by man
his own,
From home and company remote and every playful
joy,
Served, tending a few sheep and goats, a ragged
Norman boy.

Him never saw I, nor the spot, but from an English
Dame,
Stranger to me and yet my friend, a simple notice
came,
With suit that I would speak in verse of that se-
questered child
Whom, one bleak winter's day, she met upon the
dreary Wild.

His flock, along the woodland's edge with relics
sprinkled o'er
Of last night's snow, beneath a sky threatening the
fall of more,
Where tufts of herbage tempted each, were busy at
their feed,
And the poor Boy was busier still, with work of
anxious heed.

There was he, where of branches rent and withered
and decayed,
For covert from the keen north wind, his hands a
hut had made.

A tiny tenement, forsooth, and frail, as needs must be
A thing of such materials framed, by a builder such
as he.

The hut stood finished by his pains, nor seemingly
lacked aught
That skill or means of his could add, but the archi-
tect had wrought
Some limber twigs into a Cross, well shaped with
fingers nice,
To be engrafted on the top of his small edifice.

That Cross he now was fastening there, as the surest
power and best
For supplying all deficiencies, all wants of the rude
nest
In which, from burning heat, or tempest driving far
and wide,
The innocent Boy, else shelterless, his lonely head
must hide.

That Cross belike he also raised as a standard for
the true
And faithful service of the heart in the worst that
might ensue
Of hardship and distressful fear, amid the houseless
waste
Where he, in his poor self so weak, by Providence
was placed.

—Here, Lady! might I cease; but nay, let us
before we part
With this dear holy shepherd-boy breathe a prayer
of earnest heart,

That unto him, where'er shall lie his life's appointed
way,
The Cross, fixed in his soul, may prove an all-
sufficing stay.

THE ARMENIAN LADY'S LOVE.

[The subject of the following poem is from the *Oriandus* of the author's friend, Kenelm Henry Digby: and the liberty is taken of inscribing it to him as an acknowledgment, however unworthy, of pleasure and instruction derived from his numerous and valuable writings, illustrative of the piety and chivalry of the olden time.]

I.

YOU have heard 'a Spanish Lady
How she wooed an English man,' *
Hear now of a fair Armenian,
Daughter of the proud Soldan :
How she loved a Christian Slave, and told her pain
By word, look, deed, with hope that he might love
again.

II.

"Pluck that rose, it moves my liking,"
Said she, lifting up her veil ;
"Pluck it for me, gentle gardener,
Ere it wither and grow pale."
"Princess fair, I till the ground, but may not take
From twig or bed an humbler flower, even for your
sake!"

* See in Percy's Reliques, that fine old ballad, "The Spanish Lady's Love;" from which Poem the form of stanza, as suitable to dialogue, is adopted.

THE ARMENIAN LADY'S LOVE. 149

III.

“ Grieved am I, submissive Christian !
To behold thy captive state ;
Women, in your land, may pity
(May they not ?) the unfortunate.”

“ Yes, kind Lady ! otherwise man could not bear
Life, which to every one that breathes is full of care.”

IV.

“ Worse than idle is compassion
If it end in tears and sighs ;
Thee from bondage would I rescue
And from vile indignities ;
Nurtured, as thy mien bespeaks, in high degree,
Look up—and help a hand that longs to set thee
free.”

V.

“ Lady ! dread the wish, nor venture
In such peril to engage ;
Think how it would stir against you
Your most loving father's rage :
Sad deliverance would it be, and yoked with shame,
Should troubles overflow on her from whom it came.”

VI.

“ Generous Frank ! the just in effort
Are of inward peace secure :
Hardships for the brave encountered,
Even the feeblest may endure :
If almighty grace through me thy chains unbind
My father for slave's work may seek a slave in mind.”

VII.

“ Princess, at this burst of goodness,
 My long-frozen heart grows warm !”
 “ Yet you make all courage fruitless,
 Me to save from chance of harm :
 Leading such companion I that gilded dome,
 Yon minarets, would gladly leave for his worst
 home.”

VIII.

“ Feeling tunes your voice, fair Princess !
 And your brow is free from scorn,
 Else these words would come like mockery,
 Sharper than the pointed thorn.”
 “ Whence the undeserved mistrust ? Too wide apart
 Our faith hath been,—O would that eyes could see
 the heart !”

IX.

“ Tempt me not, I pray ; my doom is
 These base implements to wield ;
 Rusty lance, I ne'er shall grasp thee
 Ne'er assoil my cobwebb'd shield !
 Never see my native land, nor castle towers,
 Nor Her, who thinking of me there counts widowed
 hours.”

X.

“ Prisoner ! pardon youthful fancies ;
 Wedded ? If you *can*, say no !
 Blessed is and be your consort ;
 Hopes I cherished—let them go !
 Handmaid's privilege would leave my purpose free,
 Without another link to my felicity.”

XI.

"Wedded love with loyal Christians,
Lady, is a mystery rare;
Body, heart, and soul in union,
Make one being of a pair."

"Humble love in me would look for no return,
Soft as a guiding star that cheers, but cannot burn."

XII.

"Gracious Allah! by such title
Do I dare to thank the God,
Him who thus exalts thy spirit,
Flower of an unchristian sod!
Or hast thou put off wings which thou in heaven
dost wear?
What have I seen, and heard, or dreamt? where
am I? where?"

XIII.

Here broke off the dangerous converse:
Less impassioned words might tell,
How the pair escaped together,
Tears not wanting, nor a knell
Of sorrow in her heart, while through her father's door,
And from her narrow world, she passed for ever-
more.

XIV.

But affections higher, holier,
Urged her steps; she shrunk from trust
In a sensual creed that trampled
Woman's birth-right into dust.
Little be the wonder then, the blame be none,
If she a timid Maid, hath put such boldness on.

xv.

Judge both Fugitives with knowledge:
In those old Romantic days
Mighty were the soul's commandments
To support, or strain, or raise.
Foes might hang upon their path, snakes rustle near,
But nothing from their inward selves had they to fear.

xvi.

Thought infirm ne'er came between them,
Whether printing desert sands
With accordant steps, or gathering
Forest-fruit with social hands ;
Or whispering like two reeds that in the cold moon-
beam
Bend with the breeze their heads, beside a crystal
stream.

xvii.

On a friendly deck reposing
They at length for Venice steer ;
There, when they had closed their voyage,
One, who daily on the pier
Watched for tidings from the East, beheld his Lord,
Fell down and clasped his knees for joy, not uttering
word.

xviii.

Mutual was the sudden transport ;
Breathless questions followed fast,
Years contracting to a moment,
Each word greedier than the last ;
Hie thee to the Countess, friend ! return with speed,
And of this Stranger speak by whom her Lord was
freed.

XIX.

Say that I, who might have languished,
Drooped and pined till life was spent,
Now before the gates of Stolberg
My Deliverer would present
For a crowning recompense, the precious grace
Of her who in my heart still holds her ancient place.

XX.

Make it known that my Companion
Is of royal eastern blood,
Thirsting after all perfection,
Innocent, and meek, and good,
Though with misbelievers bred ; but that dark night
Will holy Church disperse by beams of gospel
light."

XXI.

Swiftly went that gray-haired Servant,
Soon returned a trusty Page
Charged with greetings, benedictions,
Thanks and praises, each a gage
For a sunny thought to cheer the Stranger's way,
Her virtuous scruples to remove, her fears allay.

XXII.

And how blest the Reunited
While beneath their castle-walls,
Runs a deafening noise of welcome !—
Blest, though every tear that falls
Doth in its silence of past sorrow tell,
And makes a meeting seem most like a dear farewell.

XXIII.

Through a haze of human nature,
Glorified by heavenly light,
Looked the beautiful Deliverer
On that overpowering sight,
While across her virgin cheek pure blushes strayed,
For every tender sacrifice her heart had made.

XXIV.

On the ground the weeping Countess
Knelt, and kissed the Stranger's hand;
Act of soul-devoted homage,
Pledge of an eternal band:
Nor did aught of future days that kiss belie,
Which, with a generous shout, the crowd did ratify.

XXV.

Constant to the fair Armenian,
Gentle pleasures round her moved,
Like a tutelary spirit
Reverenced, like a sister, loved.
Christian meekness smoothed for all the path of life,
Who, loving most, should wiseliest love, their only
strife.

XXVI.

Mute memento of that union
In a Saxon church survives,
Where a cross-legged Knight lies sculptured
As between two wedded Wives—
Figures with armorial signs of race and birth,
And the vain rank the pilgrims bore while yet on
earth.

A WREN'S NEST.

A MONG the dwellings framed by birds
In field or forest with nice care,
Is none that with the little Wren's
In snugness may compare.

No door the tenement requires,
And seldom needs a labored roof;
Yet is it to the fiercest sun
Impervious, and storm-proof.

So warm, so beautiful withal,
In perfect fitness for its aim,
That to the Kind by special grace
Their instinct surely came.

And when for their abodes they seek
An opportune recess,
The hermit has no finer eye
For shadowy quietness.

These find, 'mid ivied abbey-walls,
A canopy in some still nook;
Others are pent-housed by a brae
That overhangs a brook.

There, to the brooding bird her mate
Warbles by fits his low clear song;
And by the busy streamlet both
Are sung to all day long.

Or in sequestered lanes they build,
Where, till the flitting bird's return,
Her eggs within the nest repose,
Like relics in an urn.

But still, where general choice is good,
There is a better and a best ;
And among fairest objects, some
Are fairer than the rest ;

This, one of those small builders proved
In a green covert, where, from out
The forehead of a pollard oak,
The leafy antlers sprout ;

For She who planned the mossy lodge,
Mistrusting her evasive skill,
Had to a Primrose looked for aid
Her wishes to fulfil ;

High on the trunk's projecting brow,
And fixed an infant's span above
The budding flowers, peeped forth the nest
The prettiest of the grove !

The treasure proudly did I show
To some whose minds without disdain
Can turn to little things ; but once
Looked up for it in vain :

'Tis gone—a ruthless spoiler's prey,
Who heeds not beauty, love, or song,
'Tis gone ! (so seemed it) and we grieved
Indignant at the wrong.

Just three days after, passing by
In clearer light the moss-built cell
I saw, espied its shaded mouth;
And felt that all was well.

The Primrose for a veil had spread
The largest of her upright leaves;
And thus, for purposes benign,
A simple flower deceives.

Concealed from friends who might disturb
Thy quiet with no ill intent,
Secure from evil eyes and hands
On barbarous plunder bent,

Rest, Mother-bird! and when thy young
Take flight, and thou art free to roam,
When withered is the guardian Flower,
And empty thy late home.

Think how ye prospered, thou and thine,
Amid the unviolated grove
Housed near the growing Primrose-tuft
In foresight, or in love.

THE KITTEN AND FALLING LEAVES.

THAT way look, my Infant, lo!
What a pretty baby-show!
See the Kitten on the wall,
Sporting with the leaves that fall,

Withered leaves—one—two—and three—
From the lofty elder-tree !
Through the calm and frosty air
Of this morning bright and fair,
Eddying round and round they sink
Softly, slowly : one might think,
From the motions that are made,
Every little leaf conveyed
Sylph or Faery hither tending,—
To this lower world descending,
Each invisible and mute,
In his wavering parachute.

— But the Kitten, how she starts,
Crouches, stretches, paws, and darts !
First at one, and then its fellow
Just as light, and just as yellow ;
There are many now—now one—
Now they stop and there are none :
What intenseness of desire
In her upward eye of fire !
With a tiger-leap half way
Now she meets the coming prey,
Lets it go as fast, and then
Has it in her power again :
Now she works with three or four,
Like an Indian conjuror ;
Quick as he in feats of art,
Far beyond in joy of heart,
Were her antics played in the eye
Of a thousand standers-by,
Clapping hands with shout and stare,
What would little Tabby care

For the plaudits of the crowd ?
Over happy to be proud,
Over wealthy in the treasure
Of her own exceeding pleasure !

'T is a pretty baby-treat ;
Nor, I deem, for me unmeet ;
Here, for neither Babe nor me,
Other play-mate can I see.
Of the countless living things,
That with stir of feet and wings
(In the sun or under shade,
Upon bough or grassy blade)
And with busy revellings,
Chirp and song, and murmuring,
Made this orchard's narrow space,
And this vale so blithe a place ;
Multitudes are swept away
Never more to breathe the day :
Some are sleeping ; some in bands
Travelled into distant lands :
Others slunk to moor and wood,
Far from human neighborhoed ;
And, among the Kinds that keep
With us closer fellowship,
With us openly abide,
All have laid their mirth aside.

Where is he, that giddy Sprite,
Blue-cap, with his colors bright,
Who was blest as bird could be,
Feeding in the apple-tree ;

Made such wanton spoil and rout,
Turning blossoms inside out;
Hung—head pointing towards the ground—
Fluttered, perched, into a round
Bound himself, and then unbound ;
Lithest, gaudiest Harlequin !
Prettiest Tumbler ever seen !
Light of heart and light of limb ;
What is won become of Him ?
Lambs, that through the mountains went
Frisking, bleating merriment,
When the year was in its prime,
They are sobered by this time.
If you look to vale or hill,
If you listen, all is still,
Save a little neighboring rill,
That from out the rocky ground
Strikes a solitary sound.
Vainly glitter hill and plain,
And the air is calm in vain ;
Vainly Morning spreads the lure
Of a sky serene and pure ;
Creature none can she decoy
Into open sign of joy ;
Is it that they have a fear
Of the dreary season near ?
Or that other pleasures be
Sweeter even than gaiety ?

Yet, whate'er enjoyments dwell
In the impenetrable cell
Of the silent heart which Nature
Furnishes to every creature :

Whatsoe'er we feel and know
Too sedate for outward show,
Such a light of gladness breaks,
Pretty Kitten ! from thy freaks,—
Spreads with such a living grace
O'er my little Laura's face ;
Yes, the sight so stirs and charms
Thee, Baby, laughing in my arms,
That almost I could repine
That your transports are not mine,
That I do not wholly fare
Even as ye do, thoughtless pair !
And I will have my careless season
Spite of melancholy reason,
Will walk through life in such a way
That, when time brings on decay,
Now and then I may possess
Hours of perfect gladsomeness.
Pleased by any random toy ;
By a kitten's busy joy,
Or an infant's laughing eye
Sharing in the ecstasy ;
I would fare like that or this,
Find my wisdom in my bliss ;
Keep the sprightly soul awake,
And have faculties to take,
Even from things by sorrow wrought,
Matter for a jocund thought,
Spite of care, and spite of grief,
To gambol with Life's falling Leaf.

1804.

STAR-GAZERS.

WHAT crowd is this? what have we here! we
 must not pass it by;
 A Telescope upon its frame, and pointed to the sky;
 Long is it as a barber's pole, or mast of little boat,
 Some little pleasure-skiff that doth on Thames's
 waters float.

The Show-man chooses well his place, 'tis Leicester's
 busy Square;
 And is as happy in his night, for the heavens are blue
 and fair;
 Calm, though impatient, is the crowd; each stands
 ready with the fee,
 And envies him that's looking;—what an insight must
 it be!

Yet, Showman, where can lie the cause? Shall thy
 Implement have blame,
 A boaster, that when he is tried, fails, and is put to
 shame?
 Or is it good as others are, and be their eyes in fault?
 Their eyes, or minds? or, finally, is yon resplendent
 vault?

Is nothing of that radiant pomp so good as we have
 here?
 Or gives a thing but small delight that never can be
 dear?
 The silver moon with all her vales, and hills of
 mightiest fame;
 Doth she betray us when they're seen? or are they
 but a name?

Or is it rather that conceit rapacious is and strong,
And bounty never yields so much but it seems to do
her wrong?

Or is it, that when human Souls a journey long have
had

And are returned into themselves, they cannot but be
sad?

Or must we be constrained to think that these Spec-
tators rude,

Poor in estate, of manners base, men of the multitude,
Have souls which never yet have risen, and therefore
prostrate lie?

No, no, this cannot be; men thirst for power and
majesty!

Does, then, a deep and earnest thought the blissful
mind employ

Of him who gazes, or has gazed? a grave and steady
joy,

That doth reject all show of pride, admits no out-
ward sign,

Because not of this noisy world, but silent and
divine!

Whatever be the cause, 't is sure that they who pry
and pore

Seem to meet with little gain, seem less happy than
before:

One after One they take their turn, nor have I one
espied

That doth not slackly go away, as if dissatisfied.

1806.

SONNET.

THREE is a pleasure in poetic pains
Which only Poets know ;—t was rightly said ;
Whom could the Muses else allure to tread
Their smoothest paths, to wear their lightest chains ?
When happiest Fancy has inspired the strains,
How oft the malice of one luckless word
Pursues the Enthusiast to the social board,
Haunts him belated on the silent plains !
Yet he repines not, if his thought stand clear,
At last, of hindrance and obscurity,
Fresh as the star that crowns the brow of morn ;
Bright, speckless, as a softly-moulded tear
The moment it has left the virgin's eye,
Or rain-drop lingering on the pointed thorn.

SONNET.

WHEN haughty expectations prostrate lie,
And grandeur crouches like a guilty thing,
Oft shall the lowly weak, till nature bring
Mature release, in fair society
Survive, and Fortune's utmost anger try ;
Like these frail snow-drops that together cling,
And nod their helmets, smitten by the wing
Of many a furious whirl-blast sweeping by.
Observe the faithful flowers ! if small to great
May lead the thoughts, thus struggling used to stand
The Emathian phalanx, nobly obstinate ;
And so the bright immortal Theban band,
Whom onset, fiercely urged at Jove's command,
Might overwhelm, but could not separate.

A JEWISH FAMILY.

(IN A SMALL VALLEY OPPOSITE ST. GOAR, UPON THE RHINE.)

GENIUS of Raphael ! if thy wings
Might bear thee to this glen,
With faithful memory left of things
To pencil dear and pen,
Thou would'st forego the neighboring Rhine,
And all his majesty—
A studious forehead to incline
O'er this poor family.

The Mother—her thou must have seen,
In spirit, ere she came
To dwell these rifted rocks between,
Or found on earth a name ;
An image, too, of that sweet Boy
Thy inspirations give—
Of playfulness, and love, and joy,
Predestined here to live.

Downcast, or shooting glances far,
How beautiful his eyes,
That blend the nature of the star
With that of summer skies !
I speak as if of sense beguiled ;
Uncounted months are gone,
Yet am I with the Jewish Child,
That exquisite Saint John.

I see the dark-brown curls, the brow,
The smooth transparent skin,
Refined, as with intent to show
The holiness within ;

The grace of parting Infancy
 By blushes yet untamed ;
 Age faithful to the mother's knee,
 Nor of her arms ashamed.

Two lovely Sisters, still and sweet
 As flowers, stand side by side ;
 Their soul-subduing looks might cheat
 The Christian of his pride :
 Such beauty hath the Eternal poured
 Upon them not forlorn,
 Though of a lineage once abhorred,
 Nor yet redeemed from scorn.

Mysterious safeguard, that, in spite
 Of poverty and wrong,
 Doth here preserve a living light,
 From Hebrew fountains sprung ;
 That gives this ragged group to cast
 Around the dell a gleam
 Of Palestine, of glory past,
 And proud Jerusalem !

SONNET

TO ——, IN HER SEVENTIETH YEAR.

SUCH age how beautiful ! O Lady bright,
 Whose mortal lineaments seem all refined
 By favoring Nature and a saintly Mind
 To something purer and more exquisite
 Than flesh and blood ; whene'er thou meet'st my
 sight,

When I behold thy blanched unwithered cheek,
 Thy temple fringed with locks of gleaming white,
 And head that droops because the soul is meek,
 Thee with the welcome Snow-drop I compare ;
 That child of winter, prompting thoughts that climb
 From desolation toward the genial prime ;
 Or with the Moon conquering earth's misty air,
 And filling more and more with crystal light
 As pensive Evening deepens into night.

GOLD AND SILVER FISHES IN A VASE.

THE soaring lark is blest as proud
 When at heaven's gate she sings ;
 The roving bee proclaims aloud
 Her flight by vocal wings ;
 While Ye, in lasting durance pent,
 Your silent lives employ
 For something more than dull content,
 Though haply less than joy.

Yet might your glassy prison seem
 A place where joy is known,
 Where golden flash and silver gleam
 Have meanings of their own ;
 While, high and low, and all about,
 Your motions, glittering Elves,
 Ye weave—no danger from without,
 And peace among yourselves.

Type of a sunny human breast
 Is your transparent cell ;

Where Fear is but a transient guest,
No sullen Humors dwell ;
Where, sensitive of every ray
That smites this tiny sea,
Your scaly panoplies repay
The loan with usury.

How beautiful !—Yet none knows why
This ever-graceful change,
Renewed—renewed incessantly—
Within your quiet range.
Is it that ye with conscious skill
For mutual pleasure glide ;
And sometimes, not without your will,
Are dwarfed, or magnified ?

Fays, Genii of gigantic size !
And now, in twilight dim,
Clustering like constellated eyes,
In wings of Cherubim,
When the fierce orbs abate their glare ;—
Whate'er your forms express,
Whate'er ye seem, whate'er ye are—
All leads to gentleness.

Cold though your nature be, 't is pure ;
Your birthright is a fence
From all that haughtier kinds endure
Through tyranny of sense.
Ah ! not alone by colors bright
Are Ye to heaven allied,
When, like essential Forms of light,
Ye mingle, or divide.

For day-dreams soft as e'er beguiled
Day-thoughts while limbs repose ;
For moonlight fascinations mild,
Your gift, ere shutters close—
Accept, mute Captives ! thanks and praise ;
And may this tribute prove
That gentle admirations raise
Delight resembling love.

SONNET.

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820.

SHAME on this faithless heart ! that could allow
Such transport, though but for a moment's
space ;
Not while, to aid the spirit of the place—
The crescent moon clove with its glittering prow
The clouds, or night-bird sang from shady bough ;
But in plain daylight :—She, too, at my side,
Who, with her heart's experience satisfied,
Maintains inviolate its slightest vow !
Sweet Fancy ! other gifts must I receive ;
Proofs of a higher sovereignty I claim ;
Take from *her* brow the withering flowers of eve,
And to that brow life's morning wreath restore ;
Let *her* be comprehended in the frame
Of these illusions, or they please no more.

CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR.

WH0 is the happy Warrior? Who is he
 That every man in arms should wish to be?
 —It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
 Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
 Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought:
 Whose high endeavors are an inward light
 That makes the path before him always bright:
 Who, with a natural instinct to discern
 What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
 Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
 But makes his moral being his prime care;
 Who, doomed to go in company with pain,
 And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train!
 Turns his necessity to glorious gain;
 In face of these doth exercise a power
 Which is our human nature's highest dower;
 Controls them and subdues, transmutes, bereaves
 Of their bad influence, and their good receives:
 By objects, which might force the soul to abate
 Her feeling, rendered more compassionate;
 Is placable, because occasions rise
 So often that demand such sacrifice;
 More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
 As tempted more; more able to endure,
 As more exposed to suffering and distress;
 Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
 —'T is he whose law is reason; who depends
 Upon that law as on the best of friends;
 Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
 To evil for a guard against worse ill,

And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He labors good on good to fix, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows ;
—Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means ; and there will stand
On honorable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim ;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state ;
Whom they must follow ; on whose head must fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all :
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace.
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has joined
Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover ; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired ;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the law
In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw ;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need ;
—He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To homefelt pleasures, and to gentle scenes ;
Sweet images ! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart ; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve ;

More brave for this, that he hath much to love:—
"T is, finally, the Man, who, lifted high,
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won:
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast:
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth
For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name—
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause:
This is the happy Warrior; this is He
That every Man in arms should wish to be.

PRELUDE,

PREFIXED TO THE VOLUME ENTITLED "POEMS CHIEFLY
OF EARLY AND LATE YEARS."

IN desultory walk through orchard grounds,
Or some deep chestnut grove, oft have I paused
The while a Thrush, urged rather than restrained

By gusts of vernal storm, attuned his song
To his own genial instincts ; and was heard
(Though not without some plaintive tones between)
To utter, above showers of blossom swept
From tossing boughs, the promise of a calm,
Which the unsheltered traveller might receive
With thankful spirit. The descant, and the wind
That seemed to play with it in love or scorn,
Encouraged and endeared the strain of words
That haply flowed from me, by fits of silence
Impelled to livelier pace. But now, my Book !
Charged with those lays, and others of like mood,
Or loftier pitch if higher rose the theme,
Go, single—yet aspiring to be joined
With thy Forerunners that through many a year
Have faithfully prepared each other's way—
Go forth upon a mission best fulfilled
When and wherever, in this changeful world,
Power hath been given to please for higher ends
Than pleasure only ; gladdening to prepare
For wholesome sadness, troubling to refine,
Calming to raise ; and, by a sapient Art
Diffused through all the mysteries of our Being,
Softening the toils and pains that have not ceased
To cast their shadows on our mother Earth
Since the primeval doom. Such is the grace
Which, though unsued for, fails not to descend
With heavenly inspiration ; such the aim
That Reason dictates ; and, as even the wish
Has virtue in it, why should hope to me
Be wanting, that sometimes, where fancied ills
Harass the mind and strip from off the bowers
Of private life their natural pleasantness,

A Voice—devoted to the love whose seeds
 Are sown in every human breast, to beauty
 Lodged within compass of the humblest sight,
 To cheerful intercourse with wood and field,
 And sympathy with man's substantial griefs—
 Will not be heard in vain ? And in those days
 When unforeseen distress spreads far and wide
 Among a People mournfully cast down,
 Or into anger roused by venal words
 In recklessness flung out to overturn
 The judgment, and divert the general heart
 From mutual good—some strain of thine, my Book !
 Caught at propitious intervals, may win
 Listeners who not unwillingly admit
 Kindly emotion tending to console
 And reconcile ; and both with young and old
 Exalt the sense of thoughtful gratitude
 For benefits that still survive, by faith
 In progress, under laws divine, maintained.

RYDAL MOUNT,
March 26, 1842.

INSCRIPTIONS

SUPPOSED TO BE FOUND IN AND NEAR A HERMIT'S CELL.

I.

HOPEs wh' are they ?—Beads of morning
 Strung on slender blades of grass ;
 Or a spider's web adorning
 In a strait and treacherous pass.

What are fears but voices airy ?
Whispering harm where harm is not ;
And deluding the unwary
Till the fatal bolt is shot !

What is glory ?—in the socket
See how dying tapers fare !
What is pride ?—a whizzing rocket
That would emulate a star.

What is friendship ?—do not trust her,
Nor the vows which she has made ;
Diamonds dart their brightest lustre
From a palsy-shaken head.

What is truth ?—a staff rejected ;
Duty ?—an unwelcome clog ;
Joy ?—a moon by fits reflected
In a swamp or watery bog ;

Bright, as if through ether steering,
To the Traveller's eye it shone :
He hath hailed it re-appearing—
And as quickly it is gone ;

Such is Joy—as quickly hidden,
Or mis-shapen to the sight,
And by sullen weeds forbidden
To resume its native light.

What is youth ?—a dancing billow,
(Winds behind, and rocks before !)
Age ?—a drooping, tottering willow
On a flat and lazy shore.

What is peace?—when pain is over,
And love ceases to rebel,
Let the last faint sigh discover
That precedes the passing-knell!

II.

INSCRIBED UPON A ROCK.

PAUSE, Traveller! whosoe'er thou be
Whom chance may lead to this retreat,
Where silence yields reluctantly
Even to the fleecy straggler's bleat;

Give voice to what my hand shall trace,
And fear not lest an idle sound
Of words unsuited to the place
Disturb its solitude profound.

I saw this Rock, while vernal air
Blew softly o'er the russet heath,
Upheld a Monument as fair
As church or abbey furnisheth.

Unsullied did it meet the day,
Like marble, white, like ether, pure;
As if, beneath, some hero lay,
Honored with costliest sepulture.

My fancy kindled as I gazed;
And, ever as the sun shone forth,
The flattered structure glistened, blazed,
And seemed the proudest thing on earth.

But frost had reared the gorgeous Pile
Unsound as those which Fortune builds—
To undermine with secret guile,
Sapped by the very beam that gilds.

And, while I gazed, with sudden shock
Fell the whole Fabric to the ground;
And naked left this dripping Rock,
With shapeless ruin spread around!

SONNET.

TO A SNOW-DROP.

ONE Flower, hemmed in with snows and white
as they
But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead; as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, way-lay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odors lavishing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snow-drop, venturous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!

EPITAPHS,

TRANSLATED FROM CHIABRENA.

I.

WEEP not, beloved Friends ! nor let the air
 For me with sighs be troubled. Not from life
 Have I been taken; this is genuine life
 And this alone—the life which now I live
 In peace eternal ; where desire and joy
 Together move in fellowship without end—
 Francesco Ceni after death enjoined
 That thus his tomb should speak for him. And
 surely
 Small cause there is for that fond wish of ours
 Long to continue in this world ; a world
 That keeps not faith, nor yet can point a hope
 To good, whereof itself is destitute.

II.

THERE never breathed a man who, when his life
 Was closing, might not of that life relate
 Toils long and hard.—The warrior will report
 Of wounds, and bright swords flashing in the field,
 And blasts of trumpets. He who hath been doomed
 To bow his forehead in the courts of kings,
 Will tell of fraud and never-ceasing hate,
 Envy and heart-inquietude, derived
 From intricate cabals of treacherous friends.
 I, who on shipboard lived from earliest youth,
 Could represent the countenance horrible

Of the vexed waters, and the indignant rage
Of Auster and Boötes. Fifty years
Over the well-steered galleys did I rule:—
From huge Pelorus to the Atlantic pillars
Rises no mountain to mine eyes unknown;
And the broad gulfs I traversed oft and oft
Of every cloud which in the heavens might stir
I knew the force; and hence the rough sea's pride
Availed not to my Vessel's overthrow.
What noble pomp and frequent have not I
On regal decks beheld! yet in the end
I learned that one poor moment can suffice
To equalize the lofty and the low.
We sail the sea of life—a *Calm* One finds,
And One a *Tempest*—and, the voyage o'er,
Death is the quiet haven of us all.
If more of my condition ye would know,
Savona was my birth-place, and I sprang
Of noble parents: seventy years and three
Lived I—then yielded to a slow disease.

III.

O FLOWER of all that springs from gentle blood,
And all that generous nurture breeds to make
Youth amiable; O friend so true of soul
To fair Aglaia; by what envy moved,
Lelius! has death cut short thy brilliant day
In its sweet opening? and what dire mishap
Has from Savona torn her best delight?
For thee she mourns, nor e'er will cease to mourn;
And, should the outpourings of her eyes suffice not

For her heart's grief, she will entreat Sebeto
Not to withhold his bounteous aid, Sebeto
Who saw thee, on his margin, yield to death,
In the chaste arms of thy beloved Love!
What profit riches? what does youth avail?
Dust are our hopes;—I, weeping bitterly,
Penned these sad lines, nor can forbear to pray
That every gentle Spirit hither led
May read them not without some bitter tears.

By a blest Husband guided, Mary came
From nearest kindred, Vernon her new name;
She came, though meek of soul, in seemly pride
Of happiness and hope, a youthful Bride.
O dread reverse! if aught *be* so, which proves
That God will chasten whom he dearly loves.
Faith bore her up through pains in mercy given,
And troubles that were each a step to heaven:
Two Babes were laid in earth before she died;
A third now slumbers at the Mother's side;
Its Sister-twin survives, whose smiles afford
A trembling solace to her widowed Lord.

Reader! if to thy bosom cling the pain
Of recent sorrow combated in vain;
Or if thy cherished grief have failed to thwart
Time still intent on his insidious part,
Lulling the mourner's best good thoughts asleep,
Pilfering regrets we would, but cannot, keep;
Bear with Him—judge *Him* gently who makes known

His bitter loss by this memorial Stone ;
 And pray that in his faithful breast the grace
 Of resignation find a hallowed place.

THREE YEARS SHE GREW.

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
 Then Nature said, " A lovelier flower
 On earth was never sown ;
 This Child I to myself will take ;
 She shall be mine, and I will make
 A Lady of my own.

Myself will to my darling be
 Both law and impulse : and with me
 The Girl, in rock and plain,
 In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
 Shall feel an overseeing power
 To kindle or restrain.

She shall be sportive as the fawn
 That wild with glee across the lawn
 Or up the mountain springs ;
 And her's shall be the breathing balm,
 And her's the silence and the calm
 Of mute insensate things.

The floating clouds their state shall lend
 To her; for her the willow bend,
 Nor shall she fail to see
 Even in the motions of the Storm
 Grace that shall mould the Maiden's form
 By silent sympathy.

The stars of midnight shall be dear
 To her ; and she shall lean her ear
 In many a secret place
 Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
 And beauty born of murmuring sound
 Shall pass into her face.

And vital feelings of delight
 Shall rear her form to stately height,
 Her virgin bosom swell ;
 Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
 While she and I together live
 Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
 How soon my Lucy's race was run !
 She died, and left to me
 This heath, this calm and quiet scene ;
 The memory of what has been,
 And never more will be.

1790.



THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN.

AT the corner of Wood Street, when daylight
 appears,
 Hangs a Thrush that sings loud, it has sung for
 three years :
 Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has heard
 In the silence of morning the song of the Bird.

'T is a note of enchantment ; what ails her ? She
 sees
 A mountain ascending, a vision of trees ;

Bright columns of vapor through Lothbury glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the dale,
Down which she so often has tripped with her pail;
And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven; but they fade,
The mist and the river, the hill and the shade:
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not rise,
And the colors have all passed away from her eyes!

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SONNET.

COMPOSED DURING A STORM.

ONE who was suffering tumult in his soul
Yet failed to seek the sure relief of prayer,
Went forth—his course surrendering to the care
Of the fierce wind, while mid-day lightnings prowl
Insidiously, untimely thunders growl;
While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied numbers, tear
The lingering remnant of their yellow hair,
And shivering wolves, surprised with darkness, howl
As if the sun were not. He raised his eye
Soul-smitten; for, that instant, did appear
Large space (mid dreadful clouds) of purest sky,
An azure disc—shield of tranquillity;
Invisible, unlooked-for, minister
Of providential goodness ever nigh!

LAODAMIA.

"WITH sacrifice before the rising morn
Vows have I made by fruitless hope inspired;

And from the infernal Gods, 'mid shades forlorn
Of night, my slaughtered Lord have I required:
Celestial pity I again implore;—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore!"

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her hands;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye expands;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature grows;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror! what hath she perceived?—O joy!
What doth she look on?—whom doth she behold?
Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy?
His vital presence? his corporeal mould?
It is—if sense deceive her not—'tis He!
And a God leads him, winged Mercury!

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with his wand
That calms all fear; "Such grace hath crowned
thy prayer,
Laodamia! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air:
He comes to tarry with thee three hours' space;
Accept the gift, behold him face to face!"

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord to
clasp;
Again that consummation she essayed;

But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts—but parts to re-unite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

“ Protesilaus, lo ! thy guide is gone !
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice :
This is thy palace,—yonder is thy throne ;
Speak, and the floor thou tread’st on will rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon ; and blest a sad abode.”

“ Great Jove, Laodamia ! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect :—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive ;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain ;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan strand
Should die ; but me the threat could not withhold :
A generous cause a victim did demand ;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain ;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain.”

“ Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest, best !
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more
Which then, when tens of thousands were deprest
By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore ;
Thou found’st—and I forgive thee—here thou art—
A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave ;

And he, whose power restores thee, hath decreed
Thou should'st elude the malice of the grave:
Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian air.

No Spectre greets me,—no vain shadow this;
Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side!
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial kiss
To me, this day, a second time thy bride!"
Jove frowned in Heaven: the conscious Parcae threw
Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

"This visage tells thee that my doom is past;
Nor should the change be mourned, even if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish. Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus despairs:
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion: for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul:
A fervent, not ungovernable, love.
Thy transports moderate; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—"

"Ah, wherefore?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse,
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom?
Medea's spell dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth 'mid youthful peers.

The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent: for mightier far

Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distract,
And tho' his favorite seat be feeble woman's breast.

But if thou goest, I follow"—“Peace!” he said.—
She looked upon him and was calmed and cheered ;
The ghastly color from his lips had fled ;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure ;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal
The past unsighed for, and the future sure ;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued ;

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty ; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams ;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath earned
That privilege by virtue.—“Ill,” said he,
“The end of man's existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight,
While tears were thy best pastime, day and night ;

And while my youthful peers before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent)

Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained ;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

The wished-for wind was given :—I then revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea ;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan sand.

Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, beloved Wife !
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—
The paths which we had trod—these fountain
flowers ;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
'Behold they tremble !—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die ?'
In soul I swept the indignity away :
Old frailties then recurred :—but lofty thought
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

And Thou, though strong in love, art all too weak
In reason, in self-government too slow ;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathized ;
Be thy affections raised and solemnized.

Learn, by a mortal yearning, to ascend—
Seeking a higher object. Love was given,

Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end ;
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled : her bondage prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love." —

Aloud she shrieked ! for Hermes reappears ! [vain :
Round the dear shade she would have clung—"t is
The hours are past—too brief had they been years ;
And him no mortal effort can detain :
Swift toward the realms that know not earthly day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace-floor a lifeless corse She lay.

Thus, all in vain exhorted and reproved,
She perished ; and, as for a wilful crime,
By the just Gods whom no weak pity moved,
Was doomed to wear out her appointed time,
Apart from happy Ghosts, that gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

—Yet tears to human suffering are due ;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained,
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died ;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight ;
A constant interchange of growth and blight !*

* For the account of these long-lived trees, see Pliny's Natural History, lib. xvi. cap. 44 ; and for the features in the character of Protesilaus, see the Iphigenia in Aulis of Euripides. Virgil places the Shade of Laodamia in a mournful region, among unhappy Lovers,

His Laodamia
It comes —————

ON THE POWER OF SOUND.

ARGUMENT.

The Ear addressed, as occupied by a spiritual functionary, in communion with sounds, individual, or combined in studied harmony.—Sources and effects of those sounds (to the close of the 6th Stanza).—The power of music, whence proceeding, exemplified in the idiot.—Origin of music, and its effect in early ages—how produced (to the middle of the 10th stanza).—The mind recalled to sounds acting casually and severally.—Wish uttered (11th Stanza) that these could be united into a scheme or system for moral interests and intellectual contemplation.—(Stanza 12th). The Pythagorean theory of numbers and music, with their supposed power over the motions of the universe—imaginings consonant with such a theory.—Wish expressed (in 11th Stanza) realized, in some degree, by the representation of all sounds under the form of thanksgiving to the Creator.—(Last Stanza) the destruction of earth and the planetary system—the survival of audible harmony and its support in the Divine Nature, as revealed in Holy Writ.

I.

THY functions are ethereal,
As if within thee dwelt a glancing mind,
Organ of vision! And a Spirit aerial
Informs the cell of Hearing dark and blind;
Intricate labyrinth, more dread for thought
To enter than oracular cave;
Strict passage, through which sighs are brought,
And whispers for the heart their slave;
And shrieks, that revel in abuse
Of shivering flesh; and warbled air,
Whose piercing sweetness can unloose
The chains of frenzy, or entice a smile
Into the ambush of despair;
Hosannas pealing down the long-drawn aisle,
And requiems answered by the pulse that beats
Devoutly, in life's last retreats?

II.

The headlong streams and fountains
 Serve Thee, invisible Spirit, with untired powers ;
 Cheering the wakeful tent on Syrian mountains,
 They lull perchance ten thousand thousand flowers.
That roar, the prowling lion's Here I am,
 How fearful to the desert wide !
That bleat, how tender ! of the dam
 Calling a straggler to her side.
Shout, cuckoo ! let the vernal soul
 Go with thee to the frozen zone ;
Toll from thy loftiest perch, lone bell-bird, toll !
At the still hour to Mercy dear,
Mercy from her twilight throne
Listening to Nun's faint throb of holy fear,
To sailor's prayer breathed from a darkening sea,
Or widow's cottage-lullaby.

III.

Ye Voices and ye shadows,
 And Images of voice—to hound and horn
 From rocky steep and rock-bestudded meadows
 Flung back, and, in the sky's blue caves, reborn—
 On with your pastime ! till the church tower bells
 A greeting give of measured glee ;
 And milder echoes from their cells
 Repeat the bridal symphony.
 Then, or far earlier, let us rove
 Where mists are breaking up or gone,
 And from aloft look down into a cove,
 Besprinkled with a careless quire,
 Happy milk-maids, one by one,
 Scattering a ditty each to her desire,
 A liquid concert matchless by nice Art,
 A stream as if from our full heart.

IV.

Blest be the song that brightens
The blind man's gloom, exalts the veteran's mirth ;
Unscorned the peasant's whistling breath, that
lightens
His duteous toil of furrowing the green earth.
For the tired slave, Song lifts the languid oar,
And bids it aptly fall, with chime
That beautifies the fairest shore,
And mitigates the harshest clime.
Yon pilgrims see—in lagging file
They move ; but soon the appointed way
A choral *Ave Marie* shall beguile,
And to their hope the distant shrine
Glisten with a livelier ray :
Not friendless he, the prisoner of the mine,
Who from the well-spring of his own clear breast
Can draw, and sing his griefs to rest.

V.

When civic renovation
Dawns on a kingdom, and for needful haste
Best eloquence avails not, Inspiration
Mounts with a tune, that travels like a blast
Piping through cave and battlemented tower ;
Then starts the sluggard, pleased to meet
That voice of Freedom, in its power
Of promises, shrill, wild, and sweet !
Who, from a martial *pageant*, spreads
Incitements of a battle-day,
Thrilling the unweaponed crowds with plumeless
heads ?—
Even She, whose Lydian airs inspire
Peaceful striving, gentle play
Of timid hope and innocent desire

Shot from the dancing Graces, as they move
Fanned by the plausive wings of Love.

VI.

How oft along thy mazes,
Regent of sound, have dangerous Passions trod !
O Thou, through whom the temple rings with
praises,
And blackening clouds in thunder speak of God,
Betray not by the cozenage of sense
Thy votaries, wooingly resigned
To a voluptuous influence
That taints the purer, better mind ;
But lead sick Fancy to a harp
That hath in noble tasks been tried ;
And, if the virtuous feel a pang too sharp,
Soothe it into patience,—stay
The uplifted arm of Suicide ;
And let some mood of thine in firm array
Knit every thought the impending issue needs,
Ere martyr burns, or patriot bleeds !

VII.

As Conscience, to the centre
Of being, smites with irresistible pain,
So shall a solemn cadence, if it enter
The mouldy vaults of the dull idiot's brain,
Transmute him to a wretch from quiet hurled—
Convulsed as by a jarring din ;
And then aghast, as at the world,
Of reason partially let in
By concords winding with a sway
Terrible for sense and soul !
Or, awed he weeps, struggling to quell dismay.
Point not these mysteries to an Art

Lodged above the starry pole;
Pure modulations flowing from the heart
Of divine Love, where Wisdom, Beauty, Truth,
With Order dwell, in endless youth?

VIII.

Oblivion may not cover
All treasures hoarded by the miser, Time.
Orphean Insight! truth's undaunted lover,
To the first leagues of tutor'd passion climb,
When Music deigned within this grosser sphere
Her subtle essence to unfold,
And voice and shell drew forth a tear
Softer than Nature's self could mould.
Yet *strenuous* was the infant Age:
Art, daring because souls could feel,
Stirred nowhere; but an urgent equipage
Of rapt imagination sped her march
Through the realms of woe and weal:
Hell to the lyre bowed low; the upper arch
Rejoiced that clamorous spell and magic verse
Her wan disasters could disperse.

IX.

The GIFT to king Amphion
That walled a city with its melody
Was for belief no dream:—Thy skill, Arion!
Could humanize the creatures of the sea,
Where men were monsters. A last grace he craves,
Leave for one chant;—the dulcet sound
Steals from the deck o'er willing waves,
And listening dolphins gather round
Self-cast, as with a desperate course
'Mid that strange audience, he bestrides
A proud One docile as a managed horse;

And singing, while the accordant hand
 Sweeps his harp, the Master rides ;
 So shall he touch at length a friendly strand,
 And he, with his preserver, shine star-bright
 In memory, through silent night.

x.

The pipe of Pan, to shepherds
 Couched in the shadow of Mænalian pines,
 Was passing sweet ; the eyeballs of the leopards,
 That in high triumph drew the Lord of vines,
 How did they sparkle to the cymbal's clang !
 While Fauns and Satyrs beat the ground
 In cadence,—and Silenus swang
 This way and that, with wild-flowers crowned.
 To life, to *life*, give back thine ear :
 Ye who are longing to be rid
 Of fable, though to truth subservient, hear
 The little sprinkling of cold earth that fell
 Echoed from the coffin-lid ;
 The convict's summons in the steeple's knell ;
 “The vain distress-guns,” from a leeward shore,
 Repeated—heard and heard no more !

xi.

For terror, joy, or pity,
 Vast is the compass and the swell of notes :
 From the babe's first cry to voice of regal city
 Rolling a solemn sea-like bass, that floats
 Far as the woodlands—with the trill to blend
 Of that shy songstress, whose love-tale
 Might tempt an angel to descend,
 While hovering o'er the moonlight vale,
 Ye wandering Utterances, has earth no scheme,
 No scale of moral music—to unite

Powers that survive but in the faintest dream
Of memory ?—O that ye might stoop to bear
Chains, such precious chains of sight
As labored minstrelsies through ages wear !
O for a balance fit the truth to tell,
Of the Unsubstantial, pondered well !

XII.

By one pervading spirit,
Of tones and numbers all things are controlled,
As sages taught, where faith was found to merit,
Initiation in that mystery old.
The heavens, whose aspect makes our minds as still
As they themselves appear to be,
Innumerable voices fill
With everlasting harmony ;
The towering headlands, crowned with mist,
Their feet among the billows, know
That Ocean is a mighty harmonist ;
Thy pinions, universal Air,
Ever waving to and fro,
Are delegates of harmony, and bear
Strains that support the Seasons in their round ;
Stern Winter loves a dirge-like sound.

XIII.

Break forth into thanksgiving,
Ye banded instruments of wind and chords ;
Unite, to magnify the Ever-living,
Your inarticulate notes with the voice of words !
Nor hushed be service from the lowing mead,
Nor mute the forest hum of noon ;
Thou too be heard, lone eagle ! freed
From snowy peak and cloud, attune

Thy hungry barkings to the hymn
 Of joy, that from her utmost walls
 The six-days' Work, by flaming Seraphim
 Transmits to Heaven ! As Deep to Deep
 Shouting through one valley calls,
 All worlds, all natures, mood and measure keep
 For praise and ceaseless gratulation, poured
 Into the ear of God, their Lord !

xiv.

A Voice to Light gave Being ;
 To Time, and Man his earth-born chronicler ;
 A Voice shall finish doubt and dim foreseeing,
 And sweep away life's visionary stir ;
 The trumpet (we, intoxicate with pride,
 Arm at its blast for deadly wars)
 To archangelic lips applied.
 The grave shall open, quench the stars.
 O Silence, are Man's noisy years
 No more than moments of thy life ?
 Is harmony, blest queen of smiles and tears,
 With her smooth tones and discords just,
 Tempered into rapturous strife,
 Thy destined bond-slave ? No ! though Earth be dust
 And vanish, though the heavens dissolve, her stay
 Is in the WORD, that shall not pass away.

ODE.

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY
BEAUTY AND SPLENDOR.

I.

HAD this effulgence disappeared
With flying haste, I might have sent,
Among the speechless clouds, a look
Of blank astonishment;
But 't is endued with power to stay
And sanctify one closing day,
That frail Mortality may see—
What is?—ah no, but what *can* be!
Time was when field and watery cove
With modulated echoes rang,
While choirs of fervent Angels sang
Their vespers in the grove;
Or, crowning, star-like, each some sovereign
height,
Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
Strains suitable to both.—Such holy rite,
Methinks, if audibly repeated now
From hill or valley could not move
Sublimer transport, purer love,
Than doth this silent spectacle—the gleam—
The shadow—and the peace supreme!

II.

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades
The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far-distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency

Of beamy radiance that imbues,
Whate'er it strikes, with gem-like hues !
In vision, exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain-side ;
And glistening antlers are descried ;
And gilded flocks appear.
Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve !
But long as Godlike wish, or Hope divine,
Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe
That this magnificence is wholly thine !
—From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won ;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On ground which British shepherds tread !

III.

And, if there be, whom broken ties
Afflict, or injuries assail,
Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
Present a glorious scale,
Climbing suffused with sunny air,
To stop—no record hath told where !
And tempting Fancy to ascend
And with immortal Spirits blend !
—Wings at my shoulders seem to play ;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
On those bright steps that heaven-ward raise
Their practicable way.
Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad
And see to what fair countries ye are bound !
And if some traveller, weary of his road,
Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy ground,
Ye Genii ! to his covert speed ;
And wake him with such gentle heed ?

As may attune his soul to meet the dower
Bestowed on this transcendent hour!

IV.

Such hues from their celestial Urn
Were wont to stream before mine eye,
Where'er it wandered in the morn
Of blissful infancy.
This glimpse of glory, why renewed ?
Nay, rather speak with gratitude ;
For, if a vestige of those gleams
Survived, 't was only in my dreams.
Dread Power ! whom peace and calmness serve
No less than Nature's threatening voice,
If aught unworthy be my choice,
From THEE if I would swerve ;
Oh, let thy grace remind me of the light
Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored ;
Which, at this moment, on my waking sight
Appears to shine, by miracle restored ;
My soul, though yet confined to earth,
Rejoices in a second birth !
—'T is past, the visionary splendor fades ;
And night approaches with her shades.

1818.

Note.—The multiplication of mountain-ridges, described at the commencement of the third Stanza of this Ode, as a kind of Jacob's Ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapors or sunny haze; in the present instance by the latter cause. Allusions to the Ode, entitled "Intimations of Immortality," pervade the last Stanza of the foregoing Poem

RUTH.

WHEN Ruth was left half desolate,
Her Father took another Mate;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom, bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And music from that pipe could draw
Like sounds of winds and floods;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seemed to live; her thoughts her own;
Herself her own delight;
Pleased with herself, nor sad, nor gay;
And, passing thus the live-long day,
She grew to woman's height.

There came a Youth from Georgia's shore—
A military casque he wore,
With splendid feathers drest
He brought them from the Cherokees
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung:
But no! he spake the English tongue,
And bore a soldier's name;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek
In finest tones the Youth could speak :
—While he was yet a boy,
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely Youth ! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he ;
And, when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought,
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear ;
Such tales as told to any maid
By such a Youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls—a happy rout !
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long ;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants that hourly change
Their blossoms, through a boundless range
Of intermingling hues ;
With budding, fading, faded flowers,
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia, spread
High as a cloud, high over head !
The cypress and her spire ;
—Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The Youth of green savannahs spake,
And many an endless, endless lake,
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

“ How pleasant,” then he said, “ it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade
To wander with an easy mind ;
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade !

What days and what bright years ! Ah me !
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So passed in quiet bliss,
And all the while,” said he, “ to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this ! ”

And then he sometimes interwove
Fond thoughts about a father’s love :
“ For there,” said he, “ are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

Sweet Ruth ! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear ;
Or run, my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer.

Beloved Ruth !”—No more he said.
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear :
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

“ And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife.”
Even so they did ; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That on those lonesome floods,
And green savannahs, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This Stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And, with his dancing crest,
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the West.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a Youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied
To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and gorgeous flowers ;
The breezes their own languor lent ;
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those favored bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent ;
For passions linked to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw,
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known ;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
 Were thus impaired, and he became
 The slave of low desires :
 A Man who without self-control
 Would seek what the degraded soul
 Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
 Had wooed the Maiden, day and night
 Had loved her, night and morn :
 What could he less than love a Maid
 Whose heart with so much nature played ?
 So kind and so forlorn !

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
 " O Ruth ! I have been worse than dead ,
 False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
 Encompassed me on every side
 When I, in confidence and pride,
 Had crossed the Atlantic main.

Before me shone a glorious world—
 Fresh as a banner bright, unfurled
 To music suddenly :
 I looked upon those hills and plains,
 And seemed as if let loose from chains,
 To live at liberty.

No more of this ; for now, by thee,
 Dear Ruth ! more happily set free
 With nobler zeal I burn ;
 My soul from darkness is released,
 Like the whole sky when to the east
 The morning doth return."

Full soon that better mind was gone ;
No hope, no wish remained, not one,—
They stirred him now no more ;
New objects did new pleasure give,
And once again he wished to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore,
But, when they thither came, the Youth
Deserted his poor Bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth !—Such pains she had,
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed ;
And there, with many a doleful song
Made of wild words, her cup of wrong
She fearfully caroused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May ;
—They all were with her in her cell ;
And a clear brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain ;
She from her prison fled ;
But of the Vagrant none took thought ;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again:
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free;
And, coming to the Banks of Tone,
There did she rest; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves—she loved them still :
Nor ever taxed them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

A Barn her *winter* bed supplies ;
But, till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone
(And all do in this tale agree),
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray !
And Ruth will, long before her day,
Be broken down and old :
Sore aches she needs must have ! but less
Of mind, than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is prest by want of food,
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road-side ;
And there she begs at one steep place
Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travellers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
Or thrown away ; but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers :
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild—
Such small machinery as she turned
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
A young and happy Child !

Farewell ! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth, in hallowed mould
Thy corpse shall buried be,
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

TO THE CUCKOO.

O BLITHE New-comer ! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo ! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice ?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy two-fold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass
At once far off, and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome! darling of the Spring
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou wert still a hope, a love
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessed Bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place:
That is fit home for Thee!

LINES,

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON
REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A
TOUR.—JULY 13, 1798.

FIVE years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.*—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din

* The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above Tintern.

Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood and felt along the heart ;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration :—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure : such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood,
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh ! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight ; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye ! thou wanderer through the woods
How often has my spirit turned to thee !

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,

With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again :
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when
first

I came among these hills ; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams
Wherever nature led : more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For Nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colors and their forms, were then to me
An appetite, a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur ; other gifts
Have followed ; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour

Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains ; and of all that we behold
From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,*
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay :
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river ; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend ; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,

* This line has a close resemblance to an admirable line of Young's, the exact expression of which I do not recollect.

My dear, dear Sister ! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her ; 't is her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy : for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk ;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee ; and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure ; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies ; oh ! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations ? Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these
gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together ; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service : rather say

With warmer love—oh ! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

1798.

SONNET.

COMPOSED BY THE SEA SIDE NEAR CALAIS,
AUGUST, 1802.

FAIR Star of evening, Splendor of the west,
Star of my Country !—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom ; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Should'st be my Country's emblem ; and should'st
wink,
Bright Star ! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There ! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England ; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both ! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory !—I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.

TO A LADY.

IN ANSWER TO A REQUEST THAT I WOULD WRITE HER
A POEM UPON SOME DRAWINGS THAT SHE HAD MADE
OF FLOWERS IN THE ISLAND OF MADEIRA.

FAIR Lady! can I sing of flowers
That in Madeira bloom and fade,
I who ne'er sate within their bowers,
Nor through their sunny lawns have strayed?
How they in sprightly dance are worn
By Shepherd-groom or May-day queen,
Or holy festal pomps adorn,
These eyes have never seen.

Yet though to me the pencil's art
No like remembrances can give,
Your portraits still may reach the heart
And there for gentle pleasure live ;
While Fancy ranging with free scope
Shall on some lovely Alien set
A name with us endeared to hope,
To peace, or fond regret.

Still as we look with nicer care,
Some new resemblance we may trace ;
A *Heart's-ease* will perhaps be there,
A *Speedwell* may not want its place.
And so may we, with charmed mind
Beholding what your skill has wrought,
Another *Star-of-Bethlehem* find,
A new *Forget-me-not*.

From earth to heaven with motion fleet
From heaven to earth our thoughts will pass,

A *Holy-thistle* here we meet,
 And there a *Shepherd's weather-glass* ;
 And haply some familiar name
 Shall grace the fairest, sweetest plant
 Whose presence cheers the drooping frame
 Of English Emigrant.

Gazing she feels its power beguile
 Sad thoughts, and breathes with easier breath ;
 Alas ! that meek, that tender smile
 Is but a harbinger of death :
 And pointing with a feeble hand
 She says, in faint words by sighs broken,
 Bear for me to my native land
 This precious Flower, true love's last token.

PETER BELL.

A TALE.

What's in a Name ?
 * * * * *
 Brutus will start a Spirit as soon as Caesar !

TO ROBERT SOUTHEY, ESQ., P. L., ETC. ETC.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The Tale of Peter Bell, which I now introduce to your notice, and to that of the Public, has, in its manuscript state, nearly survived its minority—for it first saw the light in the summer of 1798. During this long interval, pains have been taken at different times to make the production less unworthy of a favorable reception ; or, rather, to fit it for filling *permanently* a station, however humble, in the Literature of our country. This has, indeed, been the aim of all my endeavors in Poetry, which, you know, have been sufficiently laborious to prove that I deem the Art not lightly to be approached ; and that the attainment of excellence in it, may laudably be made the principal object of intellectual pursuit by any man, who, with reasonable consideration of circumstances, has faith in his own impulses.

The Poem of Peter Bell, as the Prologue will show, was composed under a belief that the Imagination not only does not require for its exercise the intervention of supernatural agency, but that, though such agency be excluded, the faculty may be called forth as imperiously and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents, within the compass of poetic probability, in the humblest departments of daily life. Since that Prologue was written, you have exhibited most splendid effects of judicious daring, in the opposite and usual course. Let this acknowledgment make my peace with the lovers of the supernatural; and I am persuaded it will be admitted, that to you, as a Master in that province of the art, the following Tale, whether from contrast or congruity, is not an unappropriate offering. Accept it, then, as a public testimony of affectionate admiration from one with whose name yours has been often coupled (to use your own words) for evil and for good; and believe me to be, with earnest wishes that life and health may be granted you to complete the many important works in which you are engaged, and with high respect,

Most faithfully yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

BUDAL MOUNT, April 7, 1819.

PROLOGUE.

THERE'S something in a flying horse,
There's something in a huge balloon;
But through the clouds I'll never float
Until I have a little Boat,
For shape just like the crescent-moon.

And now I have a little Boat,
In shape a very crescent-moon :
Fast through the clouds my boat can sail ;
But if perchance your faith should fail,
Look up—and you shall see me soon !

The woods, my Friends, are round you roaring,
Rocking and roaring like a sea ;
The noise of danger's in your ears,
And ye have all a thousand fears
Both for my little Boat and me !

Meanwhile untroubled I admire
The pointed horns of my canoe ;
And, did not pity touch my breast,
To see how ye are all distrest,
Till my ribs ached, I'd laugh at you !

Away we go, my Boat and I—
Frail man ne'er sate in such another ;
Whether among the winds we strive,
Or deep into the clouds we drive,
Each is contented with the other.

Away we go—and what care we
For treasons, tumults, and for wars ?
We are as calm in our delight
As is the crescent moon so bright
Among the scattered stars.

Up goes my Boat among the stars
Through many a breathless field of light,
Through many a long blue field of ether,
Leaving ten thousand stars beneath her :
Up goes my little Boat so bright !

The Crab, the Scorpion, and the Bull,
We pry among them all ; have shot
High o'er the red-haired race of Mars,
Covered from top to toe with scars ;
Such company I like it not !

The towns in Saturn are decayed,
And melancholy Spectres throng them ;—
The Pleiads, that appear to kiss
Each other in the vast abyss,
With joy I sail among them.

Swift Mercury resounds with mirth,
Great Jove is full of stately bowers ;
But these, and all that they contain,
What are they to that tiny grain,
That little Earth of ours ?

Then back to Earth, the dear green Earth :—
Whole ages if I here should roam,
The world for my remarks and me
Would not a whit the better be ;
I 've left my heart at home.

See ! there she is, the matchless Earth !
There spreads the famed Pacific Ocean !
Old Andes thrusts yon craggy spear
Through the grey clouds ; the Alps are here,
Like waters in commotion !

Yon tawny slip is Libya's sands ;
That silver thread the river Dnieper ;
And look, where clothed in brightest green
Is a sweet Isle, of isles the Queen ;
Ye fairies, from all evil keep her !

And see the town where I was born !
Around those happy fields we span
In boyish gambols ;—I was lost
Where I have been, but on this coast
I feel I am a man.

Never did fifty things at once
Appear so lovely, never, never ;—
How tunefully the forests ring !
To hear the earth's soft murmuring
Thus could I hang for ever !

"Shame on you!" cried my little Boat,
"Was ever such a homesick Loon,
Within a living Boat to sit,
And make no better use of it;
A Boat twin-sister of the crescent moon!

Ne'er in the breast of full-grown Poet
Fluttered so faint a heart before;—
Was it the music of the spheres
That overpowered your mortal ears?
—Such din shall trouble them no more.

These nether precincts do not lack
Charms of their own; then come with me;
I want a comrade, and for you
There's nothing that I would not do;
Naught is there that you shall not see.

Haste! and above Siberian snows
We'll sport amid the boreal morning;
Will mingle with her lustres gliding
Among the stars, the stars now hiding,
And now the stars adorning.

I know the secrets of a land
Where human foot did never stray;
Fair is that land as evening skies
And cool, though in the depth it lies
Of burning Africa.

Or we'll into the realm of Faery,
Among the lovely shades of things;
The shadowy forms of mountains bare,
And streams, and bowers, and ladies fair,
The shades of palaces and kings!

Or, if you thirst with hardy zeal
Less quiet regions to explore,
Prompt voyage shall to you reveal
How earth and heaven are taught to feel
The might of magic lore!"

" My little vagrant Form of light
My gay and beautiful Canoe,
Well have you played your friendly part;
As kindly take what from my heart
Experience forces—then adieu.

Temptation lurks among your words;
But, while these pleasures you're pursuing
Without impediment or let,
No wonder if you quite forget
What on the earth is doing.

There was a time when all mankind
Did listen with a faith sincere
To tuneful tongues in mystery versed;
Then Poets fearlessly rehearsed
The wonders of a wild career.

Go—(but the world's a sleepy world),
And 't is, I fear, an age too late)
Take with you some ambitious Youth!
For, restless Wanderer! I, in truth
Am all unfit to be your mate.

Long have I loved what I behold,
The night that calms, the day that cheers;
The common growth of mother-earth
Suffices me—her tears, her mirth,
Her humblest mirth and tears.

The dragon's wing, the magic ring,
I shall not covet for my dower,
If I along that lowly way
With sympathetic heart may stray,
And with a soul of power.

These given, what more need I desire
To stir, to soothe, or elevate ?
What nobler marvels than the mind
May in life's daily prospect find,
May find or there create ?

A potent wand doth Sorrow wield ;
What spell so strong as guilty Fear !
Repentance is a tender Sprite ;
If aught on earth have heavenly might,
'T is lodged within her silent tear.

But grant my wishes,—let us now
Descend from this ethereal height ;
Then take thy way, adventurous Skiff,
More daring far than Hippogriff,
And be thy own delight.

To the stone-table in my garden,
Loved haunt of many a summer hour,
The Squire is come : his daughter Bess
Beside him in the cool recess
Sits blooming like a flower.

With these are many more convened ;
They know not I have been so far ;—
I see them there, in number nine,
Beneath the spreading Wyemouth-pine !
I see them—there they are !

There sits the Vicar and his Dame;
And there my good friend, Stephen Otter;
And, ere the light of evening fail,
To them I must relate the Tale
Of Peter Bell, the Potter."

Off flew the Boat—away she flees,
Spurning her freight with indignation!
And I, as well as I was able,
On two poor legs, toward my stone-table
Limped on with sore vexation.

"O, here he is!" cried little Bess—
She saw me at the garden door;
"We've waited anxiously and long,"
They cried, and all around me throng,
Full nine of them or more!

"Reproach me not—your fears be still—
Be thankful we again have met!
Resume, my Friends! within the shade,
Your seats, and quickly shall be paid
The well-remembered debt."

I spake with faltering voice, like one
Not wholly rescued from the pale
Of a wild dream, or worse illusion;
But straight, to cover my confusion,
Began the promised Tale.

PART FIRST.

ALL by the moonlight river side,
Groaned the poor Beast—alas ! in vain ;
The staff was raised to loftier height,
And the blows fell with heavier weight
As Peter struck and struck again.

“ Hold !” cried the Squire, “ against the rules
Of common sense you ’re surely sinning ;
This leap is for us all too bold ;
Who Peter was, let that be told,
And start from the beginning.”

—— “ A Potter,* Sir, he was by trade,”
Said I, becoming quite collected ;
“ And wheresoever he appeared,
Full twenty times was Peter feared,
For once that Peter was respected.

He, two-and-thirty years or more
Had been a wild and woodland rover ;
Had heard the Atlantic surges roar
On farthest Cornwall’s rocky shore,
And trod the cliffs of Dover.

And he had seen Caernarvon’s towers,
And well he knew the spire of Sarum ;
And he had been where Lincoln bell,
Flings o’er the fen that ponderous knell—
A far-renowned alarm !

* In the dialect of the North a hawker of earthenware is thus denominated,

At Doncaster, and York, and Leeds,
And merry Carlisle had he been ;
And all along the Lowlands fair,
All through the bonny shire of Ayr,
And far as Aberdeen.

And he had been at Inverness ;
And Peter, by the mountain-rills,
Had danced his round with Highland lasses ;
And he had lain beside his asses,
On lofty Cheviot Hills :

And he had trudged through Yorkshire dales,
Among the rocks and winding *scars* ;
Where deep and low the hamlets lie
Beneath their little patch of sky
And little lot of stars :

And all along the indented coast,
Bespattered with the salt-sea foam ;
Where'er a knot of houses lay
On headland, or in hollow bay ;—
Sure never man like him did roam !

As well might Peter, in the Fleet,
Have been fast bound, a begging debtor ;—
He travelled here, he travelled there ;—
But not the value of a hair
Was heart or head the better.

He roved among the vales and streams,
In the green wood and hollow dell ;
They were his dwellings night and day,—
But nature ne'er could find the way,
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

In vain, through every changeful year,
Did Nature lead him as before ;
A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more.

Small change it made in Peter's heart
To see his gentle panniered train
With more than vernal pleasure feeding,
Where'er the tender grass was leading
Its earliest green along the lane.

In vain, through water, earth, and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread,
When Peter on some April morn,
Beneath the broom or budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.

At noon, when, by the forest's edge
He lay beneath the branches high,
The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart ; he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky !

On a fair prospect some have looked
And felt, as I have heard them say,
As if the moving time had been
A thing as steadfast as the scene
On which they gazed themselves away.

Within the breast of Peter Bell
These silent raptures found no place ;
He was a Carl as wild and rude
As ever hue-and-cry pursued,
As ever ran a felon's race.

Of all that lead a lawless life,
Of all that love their lawless lives,
In city or in village small,
He was the wildest far of all ;—
He had a dozen wedded wives.

Nay, start not !—wedded wives—and twelve !
But how one wife could e'er come near him,
In simple truth I cannot tell ;
For, be it said of Peter Bell,
To see him was to fear him.

Though Nature could not touch his heart
By lovely forms, and silent weather,
And tender sounds, yet you might see
At once, that Peter Bell and she
Had often been together.

A savage wildness round him hung
As of a dweller out of doors ;
In his whole figure and his mien
A savage character was seen
Of mountains and of dreary moors.

To all the unshaped half-human thoughts
Which solitary Nature feeds
'Mid summer storms or winter's ice,
Had Peter joined whatever vice
The cruel city breeds.

His face was keen as is the wind
That cuts along the hawthorn-fence ;
Of courage you saw little there,
But, in its stead, a medley air
Of cunning and of impudence.

He had a dark and sidelong walk,
And long and slouching was his gait;
Beneath his looks so bare and bold,
You might perceive, his spirit cold
Was playing with some inward bait.

His forehead wrinkled was and furred;
A work, one half of which was done
By thinking of his '*whens*' and '*hows*',
And half, by knitting of his brows
Beneath the glaring sun.

There was a hardness in his cheek,
There was a hardness in his eye,
As if the man had fixed his face,
In many a solitary place,
Against the wind and open sky!"

ONE NIGHT (and now, my little Bess,
We've reached at last the promised Tale),
One beautiful November night,
When the full moon was shining bright
Upon the rapid river Swale,

Along the river's winding banks
Peter was travelling all alone;—
Whether to buy or sell, or led
By pleasure running in his head,
To me was never known.

He trudged along through copse and brake,
He trudged along o'er hill and dale;
Nor for the moon cared he a tittle,
And for the stars he cared as little,
And for the murmuring river Swale.

But, chancing to espy a path
That promised to cut short the way;
As many a wiser man hath done,
He left a trusty guide for one
That might his steps betray.

To a thick wood he soon is brought
Where cheerily his course he weaves,
And whistling loud may yet be heard,
Though often buried, like a bird
Darkling, amid the boughs and leaves.

But quickly Peter's mood is changed,
And on he drives with cheeks that burn
In downright fury and in wrath;—
There's little sign the treacherous path
Will to the road return!

The path grows dim, and dimmer still;
Now up, now down, the Rover wends,
With all the sail that he can carry
Till brought to a deserted quarry—
And there the pathway ends.

He paused—for shadows of strange shape,
Massy and black before him lay;
But through the dark, and through the cold,
And through the yawning fissures old,
Did Peter boldly press his way

Right through the quarry;—and behold
A scene of soft and lovely hue!
Where blue and grey, and tender green,
Together make as sweet a scene
As ever humann eye did view.

Beneath the clear blue sky he saw
A little field of meadow ground;
But field or meadow, name it not;
Call it of earth a small green plot,
With rocks encompassed round.

The Swale flowed under the grey rocks,
But he flowed quiet and unseen;—
You need a strong and stormy gale,
To bring the noises of the Swale
To that green spot, so calm and green!

And is there no one dwelling here,
No hermit with his beads and glass?
And does no little cottage look
Upon this soft and fertile nook?
Does no one live near this green grass?

Across the deep and quiet spot
Is Peter driving through the grass—
And now has reached the skirting trees;
When, turning round his head, he sees
A solitary Ass.

“ A prize !” cries Peter—but he first
Must spy about him far and near;
There’s not a single house in sight,
No woodman’s hut, no cottage light—
Peter, you need not fear!

There’s nothing to be seen but woods,
And rocks that spread a hoary gleam,
And this one Beast, that from the bed
Of the green meadow hangs his head
Over the silent stream.

His head is with a halter bound ;
The halter seizing, Peter leapt
Upon the Creature's back, and plied
With ready heels his shaggy side ;
But still the Ass his station kept.

Then Peter gave a sudden jerk,
A jerk that from a dungeon-floor
Would have pulled up an iron ring
But still the heavy-headed Thing
Stood just as he had stood before !

Quoth Peter, leaping from his seat,
"There is some plot against me laid !"
Once more the little meadow-ground
And all the hoary cliffs around
He cautiously surveyed.

All, all is silent—rocks and woods,
All still and silent—far and near !
Only the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turns round his long left ear.

Thought Peter, What can mean all this ?
Some ugly witchcraft must be here !
—Once more the Ass, with motion dull,
Upon the pivot of his skull
Turned round his long left ear.

Suspicion ripened into dread ;
Yet with deliberate action slow,
His staff high-raising, in the pride
Of skill, upon the sounding hide,
He dealt a sturdy blow.

The poor Ass staggered with the shock ;
And then, as if to take his ease,
In quiet uncomplaining mood,
Upon the spot where he had stood,
Dropped gently down upon his knees :

As gently on his side he fell ;
And by the river's brink did lie ;
And, while he lay like one that mourned,
The patient Beast on Peter turned
His shining hazel eye.

T' was but one mild, reproachful look,
A look more tender than severe ;
And straight in sorrow, not in dread,
He turned the eye-ball in his head
Towards the smooth river deep and clear.

Upon the Beast the sapling rings ;
His lank sides heaved, his limbs they stirred ;
He gave a groan, and then another,
Of that which went before the brother,
And then he gave a third.

All by the moonlight river side—
He gave three miserable groans ;
And not till now hath Peter seen
How gaunt the Creature is,—how lean,
And sharp his staring bones !

With legs stretched out, and stiff he lay :—
No word of kind commiseration
Fell at the sight from Peter's tongue ;
With hard contempt his heart was wrung,
With hatred and vexation.

The meagre beast lay still as death ;
And Peter's lips with fury quiver ;
Quoth he, " You little mulish dog,
I 'll fling your carcase like a log
Head-foremost down the river ! "

An impious oath confirmed the threat—
Whereat from the earth on which he lay
To all the echoes south, and north,
And east and west, the Ass sent forth
A long and clamorous bray !

This outcry, on the heart of Peter,
Seems like a note of joy to strike,—
Joy at the heart of Peter knocks ;
But in the echo of the rocks
Was something Peter did not like.

Whether to cheer his coward breast,
Or that he could not break the chain,
In this serene and solemn hour,
Twined round him by demoniac power,
To the blind work he turned again.

Among the rocks and winding crags ;
Among the mountains far away ;
Once more the Ass did lengthen out
More ruefully a deep-drawn shout,
The hard dry see-saw of his horrible bray !

What is there now in Peter's heart ?
Or whence the might of this strange sound ?
The moon uneasy looked and dimmer,
The broad blue heavens appeared to glimmer,
And the rocks staggered all around—

From Peter's hand the sapling dropped !
Threat has he none to execute ;
" If any one should come and see
That I am here, they 'll think," quoth he,
" I 'm helping this poor dying brute."

He scans the Ass from limb to limb,
And ventures now to uplift his eyes ;
More steady looks the moon, and clear,
More like themselves the rocks appear
And touch more quiet skies.

His scorn returns—his hate revives ;
He stoops the Ass 's neck to seize
With malice—that again takes flight ;
For in the pool a startling sight
Meets him, among the inverted trees.

Is it the moon's distorted face ?
The ghost-like image of a cloud ?
Is it a gallows there portrayed ?
Is Peter of himself afraid ?
Is it a coffin,—or a shroud ?

A grisly idol hewn in stone ?
Or imp from witch 's lap let fall ?
Perhaps a ring of shining fairies ?
Such as pursue their feared vagaries
In sylvan bower, or haunted hall ?

Is it a fiend that to a stake
Of fire his desperate self is tethering ?
Or stubborn spirit doomed to yell
In solitary ward or cell,
Ten thousand miles from all his brethren ?

Never did pulse so quickly throb,
And never heart so loudly panted ;
He looks, he cannot choose but look ;
Like some one reading in a book—
A book that is enchanted.

Ah, well-a-day for Peter Bell !
He will be turned to iron soon,
Meet Statue for the court of Fear !
His hat is up—and every hair
Bristles, and whitens in the moon !

He looks, he ponders, looks again ;
He sees a motion—hears a groan ;
His eyes will burst—his heart will break—
He gives a loud and frightful shriek,
And back he falls, as if his life were flown !

PART SECOND.

We left our Hero in a trance,
Beneath the alders, near the river ;
The Ass is by the river-side,
And, where the feeble breezes glide,
Upon the stream the moonbeams quiver.

A happy respite ! but at length
He feels the glimmering of the moon ;
Wakes with glazed eye, and feebly sighing—
To sink, perhaps, where he is lying,
Into a second swoon !

He lifts his head, he sees his staff;
He touches—'t is to him a treasure!
Faint recollection seems to tell
That he is yet where mortals dwell—
A thought received with languid pleasure!

His head upon his elbow propped,
Becoming less and less perplexed,
Sky-ward he looks—to rock and wood—
And then—upon the glassy flood
His wandering eye is fixed.

Thought he, that is the face of one
In his last sleep securely bound!
So toward the stream his head he bent,
And downward thrust his staff, intent
The river's depth to sound.

Now—like a tempest-shattered bark,
That overwhelmed and prostrate lies,
And in a moment to the verge
Is lifted of a foaming surge—
Full suddenly the Ass doth rise!

His staring bones all shake with joy,
And close by Peter's side he stands:
While Peter o'er the river bends,
The little Ass his neck extends,
And fondly licks his hands.

Such life is in the Ass's eyes,
Such life is in his limbs and ears;
That Peter Bell, if he had been
The veriest coward ever seen,
Must now have thrown aside his fears.

The Ass looks on—and to his work
Is Peter quietly resigned ;
He touches here—he touches there—
And now among the dead man's hair
His sapling Peter has entwined.

He pulls—and looks—and pulls again ;
And he whom the poor Ass had lost,
The man who had been four days dead,
Head-foremost from the river's bed
Uprises like a ghost !

And Peter draws him to dry land ;
And through the brain of Peter pass
Some poignant twitches, fast and faster ;
“ No doubt,” quoth he, “ he is the Master
Of this poor miserable Ass ! ”

The meagre Shadow that looks on—
What would he now ? what is he doing ?
His sudden fit of joy is flown,—
He on his knees hath laid him down,
As if he were his grief renewing ;

But no—that Peter on his back
Must mount, he shows well as he can :
Thought Peter then, come weal or woe,
I'll do what he would have me do,
In pity to this poor drowned man.

With that resolve he boldly mounts
Upon the pleased and thankful Ass ;
And then, without a moment's stay,
That earnest Creature turned away,
Leaving the body on the grass.

Intent upon his faithful watch,
 The Beast four days and nights had past ;
 A sweeter meadow ne'er was seen,
 And there the Ass four days had been,
 Nor ever once did break his fast :

Yet firm his step, and stout his heart ;
 The mead is crossed—the quarry's mouth
 Is reached ; but there the trusty guide
 Into a thicket turns aside,
 And deftly ambles towards the south.

When hark a burst of doleful sound !
 And Peter honestly might say,
 The like came never to his ears,
 Though he has been, full thirty years,
 A rover—night and day !

"T is not a plover of the moors,
 T is not a bittern of the fen ;
 Nor can it be a barking fox,
 Nor night-bird chambered in the rocks,
 Nor wild-cat in a woody glen !

The Ass is startled—and stops short
 Right in the middle of the thicket ;
 And Peter, wont to whistle loud
 Whether alone or in a crowd,
 Is silent as a silent cricket.

What ails you now, my little Bess ?
 Well may you tremble and look grave !
 This cry—that rings along the wood,
 This cry, that floats adown the flood,
 Comes from the entrance of a cave :

I see a blooming Wood-boy there,
And if I had the power to say
How sorrowful the wanderer is,
Your heart would be as sad as his,
Till you had kissed his tears away !

Grasping a hawthorn branch in hand,
All bright with berries ripe and red,
Into the cavern's mouth he peeps ;
Thence back into the moonlight creeps ;
Whom seeks he—whom ?—the silent dead :

His father !—Him doth he require—
Him hath he sought with fruitless pains,
Among the rocks, behind the trees ;
Now creeping on his hands and knees,
Now running o'er the open plains.

And hither is he come at last,
When he through such a day has gone,
By this dark cave to be distrest,
Like a poor bird—her plundered nest
Hovering around with dolorous moan !

Of that intense and piercing cry
The listening Ass conjectures well ;
Wild as it is, he there can read
Some intermingled notes that plead
With touches irresistible.

But Peter, when he saw the Ass
Not only stop but turn, and change
The cherished tenor of his pace—
That lamentable cry to chase—
It wrought in him conviction strange ;

A faith that, for the dead man's sake
And this poor slave who loved him well,
Vengeance upon his head will fall,
Some visitation worse than all
Which ever till this night befel.

Meanwhile the Ass to reach his home,
Is striving stoutly as he may ;
But, while he climbs the woody hill,
The cry grows weak—and weaker still ;
And now at last it dies away.

So with his freight the Creature turns
Into a gloomy grove of beech,
Along the shade with footsteps true
Descending slowly, till the two
The open moonlight reach.

And there, along the narrow dell,
A fair smooth pathway you discern,
A length of green and open road—
As if it from a fountain flowed—
Winding away between the fern.

The rocks that tower on either side
Build up a wild fantastic scene ;
Temples like those among the Hindoos,
And mosques, and spires, and abbey windows,
And castles all with ivy green !

And, while the Ass pursues his way,
Along this solitary dell,
As pensively his steps advance
The mosques and spires change countenance,
And look at Peter Bell !

That unintelligible cry
Hath left him high in preparation,—
Convinced that he, or soon or late,
This very night will meet his fate—
And so he sits in expectation!

The strenuous Animal hath clomb
With the green path; and now he wends
Where, shining like the smoothest sea,
In undisturbed immensity
A level plain extends.

But whence this faintly-rustling sound
By which the journeying pair are chased,
—A withered leaf is close behind,
Light plaything for the sportive wind
Upon that solitary waste.

When Peter spied the moving thing
It only doubled his distress;
“Where there is not a bush or tree,
The very leaves they follow me—
So huge hath been my wickedness!”

To a close lane they now are come,
Where, as before, the enduring Ass
Moves on without a moment’s stop,
Nor once turns round his head to crop
A bramble-leaf or blade of grass.

Between the hedges as they go,
The white dust sleeps upon the lane;
And Peter, ever and anon,
Back-looking sees, upon a stone,
Or in the dust, a crimson stain.

A stain—as of a drop of blood
 By moonlight made more faint and wan;
 Ha! why these sinkings of despair?
 He knows not how the blood comes there—
 And Peter is a wicked man.

At length he spies a bleeding wound,
 Where he had struck the Ass's head;
 He sees the blood, knows what it is,—
 A glimpse of sudden joy was his,
 But then it quickly fled;

Of him whom sudden death had seized
 He thought,—of thee, O faithful Ass!
 And once again those ghastly pains,
 Shoot to and fro through heart and reins,
 And through the brain like lightning pass.

PART THIRD.

I've heard of one, a gentle Soul,
 Though given to sadness and to gloom,
 And for the fact will vouch,—one night
 It chanced that by a taper's light
 This man was reading in his room;

Bending, as you or I might bend
 At night o'er any pious book,
 When sudden blackness overspread
 The snow-white page on which he read,
 And made the good man round him look.

The chamber walls were dark all round,—
And to his book he turned again;
—The light had left the lonely taper,
And formed itself upon the paper
Into large letters—bright and plain!

The godly book was in his hand—
And, on the page, more black than coal,
Appeared, set forth in strange array,
A *word*—which to his dying day
Perplexed the good man's gentle soul.

The ghostly word, thus plainly seen,
Did never from his lips depart;
But he hath said, poor gentle wight!
It brought full many a sin to light
Out of the bottom of his heart.

Dread Spirits! to confound the meek
Why wander from your course so far,
Disordering color, form, and stature!
—Let good men feel the soul of nature,
And see things as they are.

Yet, potent Spirits! well I know,
How ye, that play with soul and sense,
Are not unused to trouble friends
Of goodness, for most gracious ends—
And this I speak in reverence!

But might I give advice to you,
Whom in my fear I love so well;
From men of pensive virtue go,
Dread Beings! and your empire show
On hearts like that of Peter Bell.

Your presence often have I felt
 In darkness and the stormy night ;
 And, with like force, if need there be,
 Ye can put forth your agency
 When earth is calm, and heaven is bright.

Then, coming from the wayward world,
 That powerful world in which ye dwell,
 Come, Spirits of the Mind ! and try
 To-night, beneath the moonlight sky,
 What may be done with Peter Bell !

—O, would that some more skilful voice
 My further labor might prevent !
 Kind Listeners, that around me sit,
 I feel that I am all unfit
 For such high argument.

I 've played, I 've danced, with my narration ;
 I loitered long ere I began :
 Ye waited then on my good pleasure ;
 Pour out indulgence still, in measure
 As liberal as ye can !

Our Travellers, ye remember well,
 Are thridding a sequestered lane ;
 And Peter many tricks is trying,
 And many anodynes applying,
 To ease his conscience of its pain.

By this his heart is lighter far ;
 And, finding that he can account
 So snugly for that crimson stain,
 His evil spirit up again
 Does like an empty bucket mount.

And Peter is a deep logician
Who hath no lack of wit mercurial
“ Blood drops—leaves rustle—yet,” quoth he,
“ This poor man never, but for me,
Could have had Christian burial.

And, say the best you can, 't is plain,
That here has been some wicked dealing ;
No doubt the devil in me wrought;
I'm not the man who could have thought
An Ass like this was worth the stealing !”

So from his pocket Peter takes
His shining horn tobacco-box ;
And, in a light and careless way,
As men who with their purpose play,
Upon the lid he knocks.

Let them whose voice can stop the clouds,
Whose cunning eye can see the wind,
Tell to the curious world the cause
Why, making here a sudden pause,
The Ass turned round his head, and *grinned*.

Appalling process! I have marked
The like on heath, in lonely wood ;
And, verily, have seldom met
A spectacle more hideous—yet
It suited Peter's present mood.

And, grinning in his turn, his teeth
He in jocose defiance showed—
When, to upset his spiteful mirth,
A murmur, pent within the earth,
In the dead earth beneath the road,

Rolled audibly ! it swept along,
A muffled noise—a rumbling sound !—
'T was by a troop of miners made,
Plying with gunpowder their trade,
Some twenty fathoms underground.

Small cause of dire effect ! for, surely,
If ever mortal, King or Cotter,
Believed that earth was charged to quake
And yawn for his unworthy sake,
'T was Peter Bell the Potter.

But, as an oak in breathless air
Will stand though to the centre hewn ;
Or as the weakest things, if frost
Have stiffened them, maintain their post ;
So he, beneath the gazing moon !—

The Beast bestriding thus, he reached
A spot where, in a sheltering cove,
A little chapel stands alone,
With greenest ivy overgrown
And tufted with an ivy grove ;

Dying insensibly away
From human thoughts and purposes,
It seemed—wall, window, roof, and tower—
To bow to some transforming power,
And blend with the surrounding trees.

As ruinous a place it was,
Thought Peter, in the shire of Fife
That served my turn, when following still
From land to land a reckless will
I married my sixth wife !

The unheeding Ass moves slowly on,
And now is passing by an inn
Brim-full of a carousing crew,
That make, with curses not a few,
An uproar and a drunken din.

I cannot well express the thoughts
Which Peter in those noises found ;—
A stifling power compressed his frame,
While as a swimming darkness came
Over that dull and dreary sound.

For well did Peter know the sound ;
The language of those drunken joys
To him, a jovial soul, I ween,
But a few hours ago, had been
A gladsome and a welcome noise.

Now, turned adrift into the past,
He finds no solace in his course ;
Like planet-stricken men of yore,
He trembles, smitten to the core
By strong compunction and remorse.

But, more than all, his heart is stung
To think of one, almost a child ;
A sweet and playful Highland girl,
As light and beauteous as a squirrel,
As beauteous and as wild !

Her dwelling was a lonely house,
A cottage in a heathy dell ;
And she put on her gown of green,
And left her mother at sixteen,
And followed Peter Bell.

But many good and pious thoughts
Had she ; and, in the kirk to pray,
Two long Scotch miles, through rain or snow,
To kirk she had been used to go,
Twice every Sabbath-day.

And, when she followed Peter Bell,
It was to lead an honest life ;
For he, with tongue not used to falter,
Had pledged his troth before the altar
To love her as his wedded wife.

A mother's hope is hers ;—but soon
She drooped and pined like one forlorn
From Scripture she a name did borrow ;
Benoni, or the child of sorrow,
She called her babe unborn.

For she had learned how Peter lived,
And took it in most grievous part ;
She to the very bone was worn,
And, ere that little child was born,
Died of a broken heart.

And now the Spirits of the Mind
Are busy with poor Peter Bell ;
Upon the rights of visual sense
Usurping, with a prevalence
More terrible than magic spell.

Close by a brake of flowering furze
(Above it shivering aspens play)
He sees an unsubstantial creature,
His very self in form and feature,
Not four yards from the broad highway ;

And stretched beneath the furze he sees
The Highland girl—it is no other ;
And hears her crying as she cried,
The very moment that she died,
“ My mother ! oh my mother !”

The sweat pours down from Peter's face,
So grievous is his heart's contrition ;
With agony his eye-balls ache
While he beholds by the furze-brake
This miserable vision !

Calm is the well-deserving brute,
His peace hath no offence betrayed ;
But now, while down that slope he wends,
A voice to Peter's ear ascends,
Resounding from the woody glade :

The voice, though clamorous as a horn
Re-echoed by a naked rock,
Comes from that tabernacle—List !
Within, a fervent Methodist
Is preaching to no heedless flock !

“ Repent ! repent !” he cries aloud,
“ While yet ye may find mercy ;—strive
To love the Lord with all your might ;
Turn to him, seek him day and night,
And save your souls alive !

Repent ! repent ! though ye have gone,
Through paths of wickedness and woe,
After the Babylonian harlot ;
And, though your sins be red as scarlet,
They shall be white as snow !”

Even as he passed the door, these words
Did plainly come to Peter's ears ;
And they such joyful tidings were,
The joy was more than he could bear !—
He melted into tears.

Sweet tears of hope and tenderness
And fast they fell, a plenteous shower !
His nerves, his sinews seemed to melt ;
Through all his iron frame was felt
A gentle, a relaxing power.

Each fibre of his frame was weak ;
Weak was the animal within ;
But, in its helplessness, grew mild
And gentle as an infant child,
An infant that has known no sin.

'T is said, meek Beast ! that, through Heaven's
grace,
He not unmoved did notice now
The cross upon thy shoulder scored,
For lasting impress, by the Lord
To whom all human-kind shall bow ;

Memorial of his touch—that day
When Jesus humbly deigned to ride,
Entering the proud Jerusalem,
By an immeasurable stream
Of shouting people deified !

Meanwhile the persevering Ass,
Turned towards a gate that hung in view
Across a shady lane ; his chest
Against the yielding gate he pressed
And quietly passed through.

And up the stony lane he goes ;
No ghost more softly ever trod ;
Among the stones and pebbles, he
Set down his hoofs inaudibly,
As if with felt his hoofs were shod.

Along the lane the trusty Ass
Went twice two hundred yards or more,
And no one could have guessed his aim,—
Till to a lonely house he came,
And stopped beside the door.

Thought Peter, 't is the poor man's home !
He listens—not a sound is heard
Save from the trickling household rill ;
But stepping o'er the cottage-sill,
Forthwith a little Girl appeared.

She to the Meeting-house was bound
In hopes some tidings there to gather :
No glimpse it is, no doubtful gleam ;
She saw—and uttered with a scream,
" My father ! here's my father ! "

The very word was plainly heard,
Heard plainly by the wretched mother—
Her joy was like a deep affright :
And forth she rushed into the light,
And saw it was another !

And, instantly, upon the earth,
Beneath the full moon shining bright,
Close to the Ass's feet she fell ;
At the same moment Peter Bell
Dismounts in most unhappy plight.

As he beheld the Woman lie
Breathless and motionless, the mind
Of Peter sadly was confused ;
But, though to such demands unused,
And helpless almost as the blind,

He raised her up ; and, while he held
Her body propped against his knee,
The Woman waked—and when she spied
The poor Ass standing by her side,
She moaned most bitterly.

"Oh ! God be praised !—my heart 's at ease—
For he is dead—I know it well!"
—At this she wept a bitter flood ;
And, in the best way that he could,
His tale did Peter tell.

He trembles—he is pale as death ;
His voice is weak with perturbation ;
He turns aside his head, he pauses ;
Poor Peter from a thousand causes,
Is crippled sore in his narration.

At length she learned how he espied
The Ass in that small meadow-ground ;
And that her Husband now lay dead,
Beside that luckless river's bed
In which he had been drowned.

A piercing look the Widow cast
Upon the Beast that near her stands ;
She sees 't is he, that 't is the same ;
She calls the poor Ass by his name,
And wrings and wrings her hands.

"O wretched loss—untimely stroke!
If he had died upon his bed!
He knew not one forewarning pain;
He never will come home again—
Is dead, for ever dead!"

Beside the Woman Peter stands;
His heart is opening more and more;
A holy sense pervades his mind;
He feels what he for human kind
Had never felt before.

At length, by Peter's arm sustained,
The Woman rises from the ground—
"Oh, mercy! something must be done,
My little Rachel, you must run,—
Some willing neighbor must be found.

Make haste—my little Rachel—do,
The first you meet with—bid him come,
Ask him to lend his horse to-night,
And this good Man, whom Heaven requite,
Will help to bring the body home."

Away goes Rachel weeping loud;—
An Infant, waked by her distress,
Makes in the house a piteous cry;
And Peter hears the Mother sigh,
"Seven are they, and all fatherless!"

And now is Peter taught to feel
That man's heart is a holy thing;
And Nature through a world of death,
Breathes into him a second breath,
More searching than the breath of spring.

Upon a stone the Woman sits
In agony of silent grief—
From his own thoughts did Peter start;
He longs to press her to his heart,
From love that cannot find relief.

But roused, as if through every limb
Had past a sudden shock of dread,
The Mother o'er the threshold flies,
And up the cottage stairs she hies,
And on the pillow lays her burning head.

And Peter turns his steps aside
Into a shade of darksome trees,
Where he sits down, he knows not how,
With his hands pressed against his brow,
His elbows on his tremulous knees.

There, self-involved, does Peter sit,
Until no sign of life he makes,
As if his mind were sinking deep
Through years that have been long asleep!
The trance is passed away—he wakes;

He lifts his head—and sees the Ass
Yet standing in the clear moonshine;
“ When shall I be as good as thou ?
Oh ! would, poor beast, that I had now
A heart but half as good as thine ! ”

But *He*—who deviously hath sought
His Father through the lonesome woods,
Hath sought, proclaiming to the ear
Of night his grief and sorrowful fear—
He comes, escaped from fields and floods,—

With weary pace is drawing nigh;
He sees the Ass—and nothing living
Had ever such a fit of joy
As hath this little orphan Boy,
For he has no misgiving!

Forth to the gentle Ass he springs,
And up about his neck he climbs
In loving words he talks to him,
He kisses, kisses face and limb,—
He kisses him a thousand times!

This Peter sees, while in the shade
He stood beside the cottage door;
And Peter Bell, the ruffian wild,
Sobs loud, he sobs even like a child,
“ Oh! God, I can endure no more!”

—Here ends my Tale: for in a trice
Arrived a neighbor with his horse;
Peter went forth with him straightway;
And with due care, ere break of day,
Together they brought back the Corse.

And many years did this poor Ass,
Whom once it was my luck to see
Cropping the shrubs of Leming-Lane,
Help by his labor to maintain
The Widow and her family.

And Peter Bell, who till that night
Had been the wildest of his clan,
Forsook his crimes, renounced his folly,
And, after ten months' melancholy,
Became a good and honest man.

SONNET.

OCTOBER, 1803.

ONE might believe that natural miseries
Had blasted France, and made of it a land
Unfit for men ; and that in one great band
Her sons were bursting forth, to dwell at ease.
But 't is a chosen soil, where sun and breeze
Shed gentle favors : rural works are there,
And ordinary business without care ;
Spot rich in all things that can soothe and please !
How piteous then that there should be such dearth
Of knowledge ; that whole myriads should unite
To work against themselves such fell despite :
Should come in phrensy and in drunken mirth,
Impatient to put out the only light
Of Liberty that yet remains on earth.

TO THE SONS OF BURNS,

AFTER VISITING THE GRAVE OF THEIR FATHER.

"The Poet's grave is in a corner of the churchyard. We looked at it with melancholy and painful reflections, repeating to each other his own verses—

"Is there a man whose judgment clear," &c

Extract from the Journal of my Fellow-traveller.

'MID crowded obelisks and urns
I sought the untimely grave of Burns ;
Sons of the Bard, my heart still mourns
With sorrow true ;
And more would grieve, but that it turns
Trembling to you !

Through twilight shades of good and ill
Ye now are panting up life's hill,
And more than common strength and skill
 Must ye display ;
If ye would give the better will
 Its lawful sway.

Hath Nature strung your nerves to bear
Intemperance with less harm, beware !
But if the Poet's wit ye share,
 Like him can speed
The social hour—of tenfold care
 There will be need.

For honest men delight will take
To spare your failings for his sake,
Will flatter you,—and fool and rake
 Your steps pursue ;
And of your Father's name will make
 A snare for you.

Far from their noisy haunts retire
And add your voices to the quire
That sanctify the cottage fire
 With service meet ;
There seek the genius of your Sire,
 His spirit greet !

Or where, 'mid "lonely heights and hows,"
He paid to Nature tuneful vows ;
Or wiped his honorable brows
 Bedewed with toil,
While reapers strove, or busy ploughs
 Upturned the soil ;

His judgment with benignant ray
Shall guide, his fancy cheer, your way;
But ne'er to a seductive lay
 Let faith be given ;
Nor deem that " light which leads astray,
 Is light from Heaven."

Let no mean hope your souls enslave ;
Be independent, generous, brave ;
Your Father such example gave,
 And such revere ;
But be admonished by his grave,
 And think, and fear !

LINES

Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree, which stands near the Lake of Esthwaite, on a desolate part of the shore, commanding a beautiful prospect.

NAY, Traveller ! rest. This lonely Yew-tree
stands
Far from all human dwelling : what if here
No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb ?
What if the bee love not these barren boughs ?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

Who he was
That piled these stones and with the mossy sod
First covered, and here taught this aged Tree
With its dark arms to form a circling bower,
I well remember.—He was one who owned
No common soul. In youth by science nursed,

And led by nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favored Being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow ; 'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service ; wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude.—Stranger ! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him ; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper :
And on these barren rocks, with fern and heath,
And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life :
And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene,—how lovely 't is
Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beauteous ! Nor, that time,
When nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those Beings to whose minds
Warm from the labors of benevolence,
The world, and human life, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness : then he would sigh,
Inly disturbed, to think that others felt
What he must never feel : and so, lost man !
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep vale
He died,—this seat his only monument.

If Thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger! henceforth be warned; and know that
 pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works, one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful ever. O be wiser, Thou!
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love;
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowness of heart.

1785.

ROB ROY'S GRAVE.

The history of Rob Roy is sufficiently known: his grave is near the head of Loch Ketterine, in one of those small pinfold-like Burial-grounds, of neglected and desolate appearance, which the traveller meets with in the Highlands of Scotland.

A FAMOUS man is Robin Hood,
 The English ballad-singer's joy!
And Scotland has a thief as good,
 An outlaw of as daring mood;
She has her brave Rob Roy!
Then clear the weeds from off his Grave,
 And let us chant a passing stave,
In honor of that Hero brave!

Heaven gave Rob Roy a dauntless heart
And wondrous length and strength of arm :
Nor craved he more to quell his foes,
Or keep his friends from harm.

Yet was Rob Roy as *wise* as brave ;
Forgive me if the phrase be strong ;—
A Poet worthy of Rob Roy
Must scorn a timid song.

Say, then, that he was wise as brave ;
As wise in thought as bold in deed :
For in the principles of things
He sought his moral creed.

Said generous Rob, “ What need of books ?
Burn all the statutes and their shelves ;
They stir us up against our kind ;
And worse, against ourselves.

We have a passion—make a law,
Too false to guide us or control !
And for the law itself we fight
In bitterness of soul.

And, puzzled, blinded thus, we lose
Distinctions that are plain and few :
These find I graven on my heart :
That tells me what to do.

The creatures see of flood and field,
And those that travel on the wind !
With them no strife can last ; they live
In peace, and peace of mind.

For why?—because the good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take, who have the power,
And they should keep who can.

A lesson that is quickly learned,
A signal this which all can see!
Thus nothing here provokes the strong
To wanton cruelty.

All freakishness of mind is checked;
He tamed, who foolishly aspires;
While to the measure of his might
Each fashions his desires.

All kinds and creatures stand and fall
By strength of prowess or of wit:
'T is God's appointment who must sway,
And who is to submit.

Since, then, the rule of right is plain,
And longest life is but a day;
To have my ends, maintain my rights,
I'll take the shortest way."

And thus among these rocks he lived,
Through summer heat and winter snow:
The Eagle, he was lord above,
And Rob was lord below.

So was it—*would* at least have been
But through untowardness of fate;
For Polity was then too strong—
He came an age too late;

Or shall we say an age too soon ?
For, were the bold man living *now*,
How might he flourish in his pride,
With buds on every bough !

Then rents and factors, rights of chase,
Sheriffs, and lairds and their domains,
Would all have seemed but paltry things,
Not worth a moment's pains.

Rob Roy had never lingered here,
To these few meagre Vales confined ;
But thought how wide the world, the times
How fairly to his mind !

And to his Sword he would have said,
“ Do thou my sovereign will enact
From land to land through half the earth !
Judge thou of law and fact !

’T is fit that we should do our part,
Becoming, that mankind should learn
That we are not to be surpassed
In fatherly concern.

Of old things all are over old,
Of good things none are good enough :—
We ’ll show that we can help to frame
A world of other stuff.

I, too, will have my kings that take
From me the sign of life and death :
Kingdoms shall shift about, like clouds,
Obedient to my breath.”

And, if the word had been fulfilled,
As *might* have been, then, thought of joy !
France would have had her present Boast,
And we our own Rob Roy !

Oh ! say not so ; compare them not ;
I would not wrong thee, Champion brave !
Would wrong thee nowhere ; least of all
Here standing by thy grave.

For Thou, although with some wild thoughts,
Wild Chieftain, of a savage Clan !
Hadst this to boast of ; thou didst love
The *liberty* of man.

And had it been thy lot to live
With us who now behold the light,
Thou wouldest have nobly stirred thyself,
And battled for the Right.

For thou wert still the poor man's stay,
The poor man's heart, the poor man's hand ;
And all the oppressed, who wanted strength,
Had thine at their command.

Bear witness many a pensive sigh,
Of thoughtful Herdsman when he strays
Alone upon Loch Veol's heights,
And by Loch Lomond's braes !

And far and near, through vale and hill,
Are faces that attest the same ;
The proud heart flashing through the eyes,
At sound of Rob Roy's name.

SONNET.

A LAS! what boots the long laborious quest
Of moral prudence, sought through good and ill;
Or pains abstruse—to elevate the will,
And lead us on to that transcendent rest
Where every passion shall the sway attest
Of Reason, seated on her sovereign hill ;
What is it but a vain and curious skill,
If sapient Germany must lie deprest,
Beneath the brutal sword ?—Her haughty Schools
Shall blush ; and may not we with sorrow say,
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules,
Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
More for mankind at this unhappy day
Than all the pride of intellect and thought ?

A POET'S EPITAPH.

ART thou a Statist, in the van
Of public conflicts trained and bred ?
—First learn to love one living man ;
Then may'st thou think upon the dead.

A Lawyer art thou ?—draw not nigh !
Go, carry to some fitter place
The keenness of that practised eye,
The hardness of that sallow face.

Art thou a man of purple cheer ?
A rosy Man, right plump to see ?
Approach; yet, Doctor, not too near,
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Or art thou one of gallant pride,
A Soldier and no man of chaff?
Welcome!—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a peasant's staff.

Physician art thou? one, all eyes,
Philosopher! a fingering slave,
One that would peep and botanize
Upon his mother's grave?

Wrapt closely in thy sensual fleece,
O turn aside,—and take, I pray
That he alone may rest in peace,
Thy ever-dwindling soul away!

A Moralist perchance appears;
Led, Heaven knows how! to this poor sod;
And he has neither eyes nor ears;
Himself his world, and his own God;

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
Nor form, nor feeling, great or small;
A reasoning self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All-in-all!

Shut close the door; press down the latch;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust;
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
Near this unprofitable dust.

But who is He, with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet-brown?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley, he has viewed;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart,—
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak; both Man and Boy,
Hath been an idler in the land;
Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

—Come bither in thy hour of strength;
Come, weak as is a breaking wave!
Here stretch thy body at full length;
Or build thy house upon this grave.

1799.

ELEGIAC STANZAS.

The lamented Youth whose untimely death gave occasion to these elegiac verses, was Frederick William Goddard, from Boston, in North America. He was in his twentieth year, and had resided for some time with a clergyman in the neighborhood of Geneva for the completion of his education. Accompanied by a fellow-pupil, a native of Scotland, he had just set out on a Swiss tour, when it was his misfortune to fall in with a friend of mine who was hastening to join our party. The travellers, after spending a day together on the road from Berne and at Soleure, took leave of each other at night, the young men having intended to proceed directly to Zurich. But early in the morning my friend found

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his new acquaintances, who were informed of the object of his journey, and the friends he was in pursuit of, equipped to accompany him. We met at Lucerne the succeeding evening, and Mr. G. and his fellow-student became in consequence our travelling companions for a couple of days. We ascended the Righi together; and after contemplating the sunrise from that noble mountain, we separated at an hour and on a spot well suited to the parting of those who were to meet no more. Our party descended through the valley of our Lady of the Snow, and our late companions, to Arth. We had hoped to meet in a few weeks at Geneva; but on the third succeeding day (on the 21st of August) Mr. Goddard perished, being overset in a boat while crossing the lake of Zurich. His companion saved himself by swimming, and was hospitably received in the mansion of a Swiss gentleman (M. Keller) situated on the eastern coast of the lake. The corpse of poor Goddard was cast ashore on the estate of the same gentleman, who generously performed all the rites of hospitality which could be rendered to the dead as well as to the living. He caused a handsome mural monument to be erected in the church of Kusnacht, which records the premature fate of the young American, and on the shores too of the lake the traveller may read an inscription pointing out the spot where the body was deposited by the waves.

LULED by the sound of pastoral bells,
Rude Nature's Pilgrims did we go,
From the dread summit of the Queen*
Of mountains, through a deep ravine,
Where, in her holy chapel dwells
"Our Lady of the Snow."

The sky was blue, the air was mild ;
Free were the streams and green the bowers ;
As if, to rough assaults unknown,
The genial spot had *ever* shown
A countenance that as sweetly smiled—
The face of summer-hours.

And we were gay, our hearts at ease ;
With pleasure dancing through the frame
We journeyed ; all we knew of care—
Our path that straggled here and there ;
Of trouble—but the fluttering breeze ;
Of Winter—but a name.

* Mount Righi—Regina Montium.

If foresight could have rent the veil
Of three short days—but hush—no more!
Calm is the grave, and calmer none
Than that to which thy cares are gone,
Thou Victim of the stormy gale;
Asleep on ZURICH's shore!

Oh GODDARD! what art thou?—a name—
A sunbeam followed by a shade!
Nor more, for aught that time supplies,
The great, the experienced, and the wise:
Too much from this frail earth we claim,
And therefore are betrayed.

We met, while festive mirth ran wild.
Where, from a deep lake's mighty urn,
Forth slips, like an enfranchised slave,
A sea-green river, proud to lave,
With current swift and undefiled,
The towers of old LUCERNE.

We parted upon solemn ground
Far-lifted towards the unfading sky;
But all our thoughts were *then* of Earth,
That gives to common pleasures birth;
And nothing in our hearts we found
That prompted even a sigh.

Fetch, sympathizing Powers of air,
Fetch, ye that post o'er seas and lands,
Herbs moistened by Virginian dew,
A most untimely grave to strew,
Whose turf may never know the care
Of *kindred* human hands!

Beloved by every gentle Muse
 He left his Transatlantic home !
 Europe, a realized romance,
 Had opened on his eager glance ;
 What present bliss !—what golden views !
 What stores for years to come !

Though lodged within no vigorous frame,
 His soul her daily tasks renewed,
 Blithe as the lark on sun-gilt wings
 High poised—or as the wren that sings
 In shady places, to proclaim
 Her modest gratitude.

Not vain is sadly-uttered praise ;
 The words of truth's memorial vow,
 Are sweet as morning fragrance shed
 From flowers 'mid GOLDAU's ruins bred ;
 As evening's fondly lingering rays,
 On RIGGI's silent brow.

Lamented Youth ! to thy cold clay
 Fit obsequies the Stranger paid ;
 And piety shall guard the Stone
 Which hath not left the spot unknown
 Where the wild waves resign their prey—
 And *that* which marks thy bed.

And, when thy Mother weeps for Thee,
 Lost Youth ! a solitary Mother ;
 This tribute from a casual Friend
 A not unwelcome aid may lend,
 To feed the tender luxury,
 The rising pang to smother." *

* The persuasion here expressed was not groundless. The first human consolation that the afflicted Moth. r felt was derived from the tribute to her son's memory, a fact which the author learned, at his own residence, from her Daughter, who visited Europe some years afterwards. Goldau is one of the villages desolated by the fall of part of the Mountain Rossberg.

SONNET.

OH what a wreck! how changed in mien and speech!
 Yet—though dread Powers, that work in mystery,
 spin
 Entanglings of the brain ; though shadows stretch
 O'er the chilled heart—reflect ; far, far within
 Hers is a holy Being, freed from Sin.
 She is not what she seems, a forlorn wretch,
 But delegated Spirits comfort fetch
 To Her from heights that Reason may not win.
 Like Children, She is privileged to hold
 Divine communion ; both to live and move,
 Whate'er to shallow Faith their ways unfold,
 Only illumined by Heaven's pitying love ;
 Love pitying innocence not long to last,
 In them—in Her our sins and sorrows past.

THE FARMER OF TILSBURY VALE.

TIS not for the unfeeling, the falsely refined,
 The squeamish in taste, and the narrow of mind,
 And the small critic wielding his delicate pen,
 That I sing of old Adam, the pride of old men.

He dwells in the centre of London's wide Town ;
 His staff is a sceptre—his grey hairs a crown ;
 And his bright eyes look brighter set off by the
 streak
 Of the unfaded rose that still blooms on his cheek.

'Mid the dews, in the sunshine of morn,—'mid the
joy
Of the fields, he collected that bloom, when a boy ;
That countenance there fashioned, which, spite of a
stain
That his life hath received, to the last will remain.

A Farmer he was ; and his house far and near
Was the boast of the country for excellent cheer :
How oft have I heard in sweet Tilsbury Vale
Of the silver-rimmed horn whence he dealt his mild
ale !

Yet Adam was far as the farthest from ruin,
His fields seemed to know what their Master was
doing ;
And turnips, and corn-land, and meadow, and lea,
All caught the infection—as generous as he.

Yet Adam prized little the feast and the bowl,—
The fields better suited the ease of his soul :
He strayed through the fields like an indolent wight,
The quiet of Nature was Adam's delight.

For Adam was simple in thought ; and the poor,
Familiar with him, made an inn of his door ;
He gave them the best that he had ; or, to say
What less may mislead you, they took it away.

Thus thirty smooth years did he thrive on his farm .
The Genius of plenty preserved him from harm :
At length, what to most is a season of sorrow,
His means are run out,—he must beg, or must
borrow.

To the neighbors he went,—all were free with their
money ;
For his hive had so long been replenished with honey,
That they dreamt not of dearth ;—He continued his
rounds,
Knocked here—and knocked there, pounds still
adding to pounds.

He paid what he could with his ill-gotten pelf,
And something, it might be, reserved for himself :
Then (what is too true) without hinting a word,
Turned his back on the country—and off like a bird.

You lift up your eyes !—but I guess that you frame
A judgment too harsh of the sin and the shame ;
In him it was scarcely a business of art,
For this he did all in the *ease* of his heart.

To London—a sad emigration I ween—
With his grey hairs he went from the brook and the
green ;
And there, with small wealth but his legs and his
hands,
As lonely he stood as a crow on the sands.

All trades, as need was, did old Adam assume,—
Served as stable-boy, errand-boy, porter, and groom ;
But nature is gracious, necessity kind,
And, in spite of the shame that may lurk in his
mind,

He seems ten birthdays younger, is green and is
stout ;
Twice as fast as before does his blood run about ;

You would say that each hair of his beard was alive,
And his fingers are busy as bees in a hive.

For he's not like an Old Man that leisurely goes
About work that he knows, in a track that he knows ;
But often his mind is compelled to demur,
And you guess that the more then his body must stir.

In the throng of the town like a stranger is he,
Like one whose own country's far over the sea ;
And Nature, while through the great city he hies,
Full ten times a day takes his heart by surprise.

This gives him the fancy of one that is young,
More of soul in his face than of words on his tongue ;
Like a maiden of twenty he trembles and sighs,
And tears of fifteen will come into his eyes.

What's a tempest to him, or the dry parching heats ?
Yet he watches the clouds that pass over the streets ;
With a look of such earnestness often will stand,
You might think he'd twelve reapers at work in the
Strand.

Where proud Covent-garden, in desolate hours
Of snow and hoar-frost, spreads her fruits and her
flowers,
Old Adam will smile at the pains that have made
Poor winter look fine in such strange masquerade.

'Mid coaches and chariots, a wagon of straw,
Like a magnet, the heart of old Adam can draw ;
With a thousand soft pictures his memory will teem,
And his hearing is touched with the sounds of a
dream.

Up the Haymarket hill he oft whistles his way,
Thrusts his hands in a wagon, and smells at the hay;
He thinks of the fields he so often hath mown,
And is happy as if the rich freight were his own.

But chiefly to Smithfield he loves to repair,—
If you pass by at morning, you 'll meet with him —
there.

The breath of the cows you may see him inhale,
And his heart all the while is in Tilsbury Vale.

Now farewell, old Adam ! when low thou art laid
May one blade of grass spring up over thy head ;
And I hope that thy grave, wheresoever it be,
Will hear the wind sigh through the leaves of a tree.

1802.

INCIDENT AT BRUGES.

IN Bruges town is many a street
Whence busy life hath fled ;
Where, without hurry, noiseless feet,
The grass-grown pavement tread.
There heard we, halting in the shade
Flung from a Convent-tower,
A harp that tuneful prelude made
To a voice of thrilling power.

The measure, simple truth to tell,
Was fit for some gay throng ;
Though from the same grim turret fell
The shadow and the song.

When silent were both voice and chords,
The strain seemed doubly dear,
Yet sad as sweet,—for *English words*
Had fallen upon the ear.

It was a breezy hour of eve ;
And pinnacle and spire
Quivered and seemed almost to heave,
Clothed with innocuous fire ;
But, where we stood, the setting sun
Showed little of his state ;
And, if the glory reached the Nun,
'T was through an iron grate.

Not always is the heart unwise,
Nor pity idly born,
If even a passing stranger sighs
For them who do not mourn.
Sad is thy doom, self-solaced dove,
Captive, whoe'er thou be !
Oh ! what is beauty, what is love,
And opening life to thee ?

Such feeling pressed upon my soul,
A feeling sanctified
By one soft trickling tear that stole
From the Maiden at my side ;
Less tribute could she pay than this,
Borne gaily o'er the sea,
Fresh from the beauty and the bliss
Of English liberty ?

SONNET.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF
SWITZERLAND.

TWO Voices are there ; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains ; each a mighty Voice ;
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty !
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him ; but hast vainly striven :
Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft :
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left ;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee !



YARROW VISITED—SEPTEMBER, 1814.

AND is this—Yarrow ?—*This* the Stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully a waking dream ?
An image that hath perished !
O that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness !

Yet why ?—a silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings ;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all thy wanderings,
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted ;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow Vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness ;
Mild dawn of promise ! that excludes
All profitless dejection ;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding ?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding :
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice—
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers :
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love ;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow !

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation :
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy ;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature ;
And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary !
The shattered front of Newark's Towers,
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in ;
For manhood to enjoy his strength ;
And age to wear away in ;
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts that nestle there—
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather !
And what if I unwreathed my own !
'T were no offence to reason ;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
 Loved Yarrow, have I won thee ;
 A ray of fancy still survives—
 Her sunshine plays upon thee !
 Thy ever youthful waters keep
 A course of lively pleasure ;
 And gladsome notes my lips can breathe,
 Accordant to the measure.

The vapors linger round the Heights,
 They melt, and soon must vanish ;
 One hour is theirs, nor more is mine—
 Sad thought, which I would banish,
 But that I know, where'er I go,
 Thy genuine image, Yarrow !
 Will dwell with me—to heighten joy,
 And cheer my mind with sorrow.

GRACE DARLING.

AMONG the dwellers in the silent field
 The natural heart is touched, and public way
 And crowded street resound with ballad strains,
 Inspired by ONE whose very name bespeaks
 Favor divine, exalting human love ;
 Whom, since her birth on bleak Northumbria's
 coast,
 Known unto few, but prized as far as known,
 A single Act endears to high and low
 Through the whole land—to Manhood, moved in
 spite
 Of the world's freezing cares—to generous Youth—

To Infancy, that lisps her praise—to Age
Whose eye reflects it, glistening through a tear
Of tremulous admiration. Such true fame
Awaits her *now*; but, verily, good deeds
Do no imperishable record find
Save in the rolls of heaven, where hers may live
A theme for angels, when they celebrate
The high-souled virtues which forgetful earth
Has witness'd. Oh! that winds and waves could
 speak
Of things which their united power called forth
From the pure depths of her humanity!
A Maiden gentle, yet, at duty's call,
Firm and unflinching, as the Lighthouse reared
On the Island-rock, her lonely dwelling-place;
Or like the invincible Rock itself that braves,
Age after age, the hostile elements,
As when it guarded holy Cuthbert's cell.

All night the storm had raged, nor ceased, nor
 paused,
When, as day broke, the Maid, through misty air,
Espies far off a Wreck, amid the surf,
Beating on one of those disastrous isles—
Half of a Vessel, half—no more; the rest
Had vanished, swallowed up with all that there
Had for the common safety striven in vain,
Or thither thronged for refuge. With quick glance
Daughter and Sire through optic-glass discern,
Clinging about the remnant of this Ship,
Creatures, how precious in the Maiden's sight!
For whom, belike, the old Man grieves still more
Than for their fellow-sufferers engulfed
Where every parting agony is hushed,

And hope and fear mix not in open strife.
“But courage, Father! let us out to sea—
A few may yet be saved.” The Daughter’s words,
Her earnest tone, and look beaming with faith,
Dispel the Father’s doubts: nor do they lack
The noble-minded Mother’s helping hand
To launch the boat; and with her blessing cheered,
And inwardly sustained by silent prayer,
Together they put forth, Father and Child!
Each grasps an oar, and struggling on they go—
Rivals in effort; and, alike intent
Here to elude and there surmount, they watch
The billows lengthening, mutually crossed
And shattered, and re-gathering their might;
As if the tumult, by the Almighty’s will
Were, in the conscious sea, roused and prolonged
That woman’s fortitude—so tried, so proved—
May brighten more and more!

True to the mark,
They stem the current of that perilous gorge,
Their arms still strengthening with the strengthening
heart,
Though danger, as the Wreck is near’d, becomes
More imminent. Not unseen do they approach;
And rapture, with varieties of fear
Incessantly conflicting, thrills the frames
Of those who, in that dauntless energy,
Foretaste deliverance; but the least perturbed
Can scarcely trust his eyes, when he perceives
That of the pair—tossed on the waves to bring
Hope to the hopeless, to the dying, life—
One is a Woman, a poor earthly sister,
Or, be the Visitant other than she seems,

A guardian Spirit sent from pitying Heaven,
In Woman's shape. But why prolong the tale,
Casting meek words amid a host of thoughts
Armed to repel them ? Every hazard faced
And difficulty mastered, with resolve
That no one breathing should be left to perish,
This last remainder of the crew are all
Placed in the little boat, then o'er the deep
Are safely borne, landed upon the beach,
And, in fulfilment of God's mercy, lodged
Within the sheltering Lighthouse. Shout, ye
Waves !

Send forth a song of triumph. Waves and Winds,
Exult in this deliverance wrought through faith
In Him whose Providence your rage hath served !
Ye screaming Sea-mews, in the concert join !
And would that some immortal Voice—a Voice
Fitly attuned to all that gratitude
Breathes out from floor or couch, through pallid lips
Of the survivors—to the clouds might bear—
Blended with praise of that parental love,
Beneath whose watchful eye the Maiden grew
Pious and pure, modest and yet so brave,
Though young so wise, though meek so resolute—
Might carry to the clouds and to the stars,
Yea, to celestial Choirs, GRACE DARLING's name !

1842.

SONNET.

GR EAT men have been among us ; hands that
penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom—better none :
The later Sidney, Marvel, Harrington,
Young Vane, and others who called Milton friend.
These moralists could act and comprehend :
They knew how genuine glory was put on ;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendor : what strength was, that would not
 bend
But in magnanimous meekness. France, 't is strange,
Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
Perpetual emptiness ! unceasing change !
No single volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road ;
But equally a want of books and men !

INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH.

FROM AN UNPUBLISHED POEM.

(This extract is reprinted from "THE FRIEND.")

WI S D O M and Spirit of the Universe !
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought !
And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion ! not in vain,
By day or star-light, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood didst thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul :

Not with the mean and vulgar works of man ;
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature, purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapors rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome ; among woods
At noon ; and mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, homeward I went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine :
Mine was it in the fields both day and night
And by the waters, all the summer long,
And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and, visible for many a mile,
The cottage windows through the twilight blazed,
I heeded not the summons ; happy time
It was indeed for all of us ; for me
It was a time of rapture ! Clear and loud
The village-clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice, in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle : with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud ;

The leafless trees, and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron ; while far-distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy, not unnoticed while the stars,
Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star ;
Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain : and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short ; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round !
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

1792.

THE BROTHERS.

“ THESE Tourists, heaven preserve us ! needs
 must live
A profitable life ; some glance along,
Rapid and gay, as if the earth were air,
And they were butterflies to wheel about
Long as the summer lasted ; some, as wise,

Perched on the forehead of a jutting crag,
Pencil in hand and book upon the knee,
Will look and scribble, scribble on and look,
Until a man might travel twelve stout miles,
Or reap an acre of his neighbor's corn,
But, for that moping Son of Idleness,
Why can he tarry *yonder*?—In our church-yard
Is neither epitaph nor monument,
Tombstone nor name—only the turf we tread
And a few natural graves."

To Jane, his wife,
Thus spake the homely Priest of Ennerdale.
It was a July evening, and he sate
Upon the long stone-seat beneath the eaves
Of his old cottage,—as it chanced, that day,
Employed in winter's work. Upon the stone
His wife sate near him, teasing matted wool,
While from the twin cards toothed with glittering wire,
He fed the spindle of his youngest child,
Who, in the open air, with due accord
Of busy hands and back-and-forward steps,
Her large round wheel was turning. Towards the
field

In which the Parish Chapel stood alone,
Girt round with a bare ring of mossy wall,
While half an hour went by, the Priest had sent
Many a long look of wonder: and at last,
Risen from his seat, beside the snow-white ridge
Of carded wool which the old man had piled,
He laid his implements with gentle care,
Each in the other locked; and, down the path
That from his cottage to the church-yard led,
He took his way, impatient to accost
The stranger, whom he saw still lingering there.

T was one well known to him in former days,
 A Shepherd-lad ; who ere his sixteenth year
 Had left that calling, tempted to entrust
 His expectations to the fickle winds
 And perilous waters ; with the mariners
 A fellow-mariner ;—and so had fared
 Through twenty seasons ; but he had been reared
 Among the mountains, and he in his heart
 Was half a shepherd on the stormy seas.
 Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard
 The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds
 Of caves and trees :—and, when the regular wind
 Between the tropics filled the steady sail,
 And blew with the same breath through days and
 weeks,
 Lengthening invisibly its weary line
 Along the cloudless Main, he, in those hours
 Of tiresome indolence, would often hang
 Over the vessel's side, and gaze and gaze ;
 And, while the broad blue wave and sparkling foam
 Flashed round him images and hues that wrought
 In union with the employment of his heart,
 He, thus by feverish passion overcome,
 Even with the organs of his bodily eye,
 Below him, in the bosom of the deep,
 Saw mountains ; saw the forms of sheep that grazed
 On verdant hills—with dwellings among trees,
 And shepherds clad in the same country grey
 Which he himself had worn.*

And now, at last,
 From perils manifold, with some small wealth

* The description of the Calenture is sketched from an imperfect recollection of an admirable one in prose, by Mr. Gilbert, author of the *Hurleane*.

Acquired by traffic 'mid the Indian Isles,
To his paternal home he is returned,
With a determined purpose to resume
The life he had lived there ; both for the sake
Of many darling pleasures and the love
Which to an only brother he has borne
In all his hardships, since that happy time
When, whether it blew foul or fair, they two
Were brother-shepherds on their native hills.
—They were the last of all their race : and now
When Leonard had approached his home, his heart
Failed in him ; and, not venturing to inquire
Tidings of one so long and dearly loved,
He to the solitary church-yard turned ;
That, as he knew in what particular spot
His family were laid, he thence might learn
If still his Brother lived, or to the file
Another grave was added. He had found
Another grave,—near which a full half-hour
He had remained ; but, as he gazed, there grew
Such a confusion in his memory,
That he began to doubt, and even to hope
That he had seen this heap of turf before,—
That it was not another grave ; but one
He had forgotten. He had lost his path,
As up the vale, that afternoon, he walked
Through fields which once had been well known to
him :
And oh what joy this recollection now
Seat to his heart ! he lifted up his eyes,
And, looking round, imagined that he saw
Strange alteration wrought on every side
Among the woods and fields, and that the rocks,
And everlasting hills themselves were changed.

By this the Priest, who down the field had come,
Unseen by Leonard, at the church-yard gate
Stopped short,—and thence, at leisure, limb by limb
Perused him with a gay complacency.
Aye, thought the Vicar, smiling to himself,
'T is one of those who needs must leave the path,
Of the world's business to go wild alone:
His arms have a perpetual holiday;
The happy man will creep about the fields,
Following his fancies by the hour, to bring
Tears down his cheek, or solitary smiles
Into his face, until the setting sun
Write fool upon his forehead.—Planted thus
Beneath a shed that over-arched the gate
Of this rude church-yard, till the stars appeared
The good Man might have communed with himself,
But that the Stranger, who had left the grave,
Approached; he recognised the Priest at once,
And, after greetings interchanged, and given
By Leonard to the Vicar as to one
Unknown to him, this dialogue ensued.

Leonard. You live, Sir, in these dales, a quiet
life:
Your years make up one peaceful family;
And who would grieve and fret, if, welcome come
And welcome gone, they are so like each other,
They cannot be remembered? Scarce a funeral
Comes to this church-yard once in eighteen months;
And yet, some changes must take place among you:
And you, who dwell here, even among these rocks,
Can trace the finger of mortality,
And see, that with our threescore years and ten,
We are not all that perish.—I remember
(For many years ago I passed this road)

There was a foot-way all along the fields
By the brook-side—'t is gone—and that dark cleft!
To me it does not seem to wear the face
Which then it had!

Priest. Nay, Sir, for aught I know,
That chasm is much the same—

Leonard. But, surely, yonder—

Priest. Ay, there, indeed, your memory is a friend
That does not play you false.—On that tall pike
(It is the loneliest place of all these hills)
There were two springs which bubbled side by side.
As if they had been made that they might be
Companions for each other: the huge crag
Was rent with lightning—one hath disappeared;
The other, left behind, is flowing still.

For accidents and changes such as these,
We want not store of them ;—a water-spout
Will bring down half a mountain; what a feast
For folks that wander up and down like you,
To see an acre's breadth of that wide cliff
One roaring cataract! a sharp May-storm
Will come with loads of January snow,
And in one night send twenty score of sheep
To feed the ravens; or a shepherd dies
By some untoward death among the rocks:
The ice breaks up and sweeps away a bridge;
A wood is felled ;—and then for our own homes!
A child is born or christened, a field ploughed,
A daughter sent to service, a web spun,
The old house-clock is decked with a new face;
And hence, so far from wanting facts or dates
To chronicle the time, we all have here
A pair of diaries,—one serving, Sir,
For the whole dale, and one for each fire-side—

Yours was a stranger's judgment: for historians,
Commend me to these valleys!

Leonard. Yet your Church-yard
Seems, if such freedom may be used with you,
To say that you are heedless of the past:
An orphan could not find his mother's grave:
Here's neither head nor foot-stone, plate of brass,
Cross-bones nor skull,—type of our earthly state
Nor emblem of our hopes: the dead man's home
Is but a fellow to that pasture-field.

Priest. Why, there, Sir, is a thought that's new
to me!

The stone-cutters, 't is true, might beg their bread
If every English church-yard were like ours;
Yet your conclusion wanders from the truth:
We have no need of names and epitaphs;
We talk about the dead by our fire-sides.
And then, for our immortal part! *we* want
No symbols, Sir, to tell us that plain tale:
The thought of death sits easy on the man
Who has been born and dies among the mountains.

Leonard. Your Dalesmen, then, do in each other's
thoughts
Possess a kind of second life: no doubt
You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?

Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might; and, on a winter-evening,
If you were seated at my chimney's nook,
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.
Now there's a grave—your foot is half upon it,—

It looks just like the rest ; and yet that man
Died broken-hearted.

Leonard. 'T is a common case.
We 'll take another : who is he that lies
Beneath yon ridge, the last of those three graves ?
It touches on that piece of native rock
Left in the church-yard wall.

Priest. That's Walter Ewbank.
He had as white a head and fresh a cheek
As ever were produced by youth and age
Engendering in the blood of hale fourscore.
Through five long generations had the heart
Of Walter's forefathers o'erflowed the bounds
Of their inheritance, that single cottage—
You see it yonder ! and those few green fields.
They toiled and wrought, and still, from sire to son,
Each struggled, and each yielded as before
A little—yet a little,—and old Walter
They left to him the family heart, and land
With other burdens than the crop it bore.
Year after year the old man still kept up
A cheerful mind,—and buffeted with bond,
Interest, and mortgages ; at last he sank,
And went into his grave before his time.
Poor Walter ! whether it was care that spurred him
God only knows, but to the very last
He had the lightest foot in Ennerdale :
His pace was never that of an old man :
I almost see him tripping down the path
With his two grandsons after him :—but you,
Unless our Landlord be your host to-night,
Have far to travel,—and on these rough paths
Even in the longest day of midsummer—
Leonard. But those two Orphans !

Priest. *Orphans!*—Such they were—
Yet not while Walter lived :—for, though their pa-
rents

Lay buried side by side as now they lie,
The old man was a father to the boys,
Two fathers in one father ; and if tears,
Shed when he talked of them where they were not,
And hauntings from the infirmity of love,
Are aught of what makes up a mother's heart,
This old Man, in the day of his old age,
Was half a mother to them.—If you weep, Sir,
To hear a stranger talking about strangers,
Heaven bless you when you are among your kindred !
Aye—you may turn that way—it is a grave
Which will bear looking at.

Leonard. These boys—I hope
They loved this good old Man ?—

Priest. They did—and truly :
But that was what we almost overlooked,
They were such darlings of each other. Yes,
Though from the cradle they had lived with Walter,
The only kinsman near them, and though he
Inclined to both by reason of his age,
With a more fond, familiar tenderness ;
They, notwithstanding, had much love to spare,
And it all went into each other's hearts.
Leonard, the elder by just eighteen months,
Was two years tall'r : 't was a joy to see,
To hear, to meet them!—From their house the
school

Is distant three short miles, and in the time
Of storm and thaw, when every water-course
And unbridged stream, such as you may have noticed
Crossing our roads at every hundred steps,

Was swoln into a noisy rivulet,
Would Leonard then, when elder boys remained
At home, go staggering through the slippery fords,
Bearing his brother on his back. I have seen him,
On windy days, in one of those stray brooks,
Aye, more than once I have seen him, mid-leg deep
Their two books lying both on a dry stone,
Upon the hither side ; and once I said,
As I remember, looking round these rocks
And hills on which we all of us were born,
That God, who made the great book of the world
Would bless such piety—

Leonard.

It may be then—

Priest. Never did worthier lads break English
bread ;

The very brightest Sunday Autumn saw
With all its mealy clusters of ripe nuts,
Could never keep those boys away from church,
Or tempt them to an hour of Sabbath breach.
Leonard and James ! I warrant, every corner
Among these rocks, and every hollow place
That venturous foot could reach, to one or both
Was known as well as to the flowers that grow there.
Like roe-bucks they went bounding o'er the hills ;
They played like two young ravens on the crags :
Then they could write, aye and speak too, as well
As many of their betters—and for Leonard !
The very night before he went away,
In my own house I put into his hand
A bible, and I'd wager house and field
'That, if he be alive, he has it yet.'

Leonard. It seems, these brothers have not lived
to be
A comfort to each other—

Priest. That they might
Live to such end is what both old and young
In this our valley all of us have wished,
And what, for my part, I have often prayed :
But Leonard—

Leonard. Then James still is left among you !
Priest. 'T is of the elder brother I am speaking :
They had an uncle ;—he was at that time
A thriving man, and trafficked on the seas :
And, but for that same uncle, to this hour
Leonard had never handled rope or shroud :
For the boy loved the life which we lead here ;
And though of unripe years, a stripling only,
His soul was knit to this his native soil.
But, as I said, old Walter was too weak
To strive with such a torrent ; when he died,
The estate and house were sold ; and all their sheep,
A pretty flock, and which, for aught I know,
Had clothed the Ewbanks for a thousand years :—
Well—all was gone, and they were destitute,
And Leonard, chiefly for his Brother's sake,
Resolved to try his fortune on the seas.
Twelve years are past since we had tidings from him.
If there were one among us who had heard
That Leonard Ewbank was come home again,
From the Great Gavel,* down by Leeza's banks,
And down the Enna, far as Egremont,
The day would be a joyous festival ;
And those two bells of ours, which there you see—

* The Great Gavel, so called, I imagine, from its resemblance to the gable end of a house, is one of the highest of the Cumberland mountains. It stands at the head of the several vales of Ennerdale, Wastdale, and Borrowdale.

The Leeza is a river which flows into the Lake of Ennerdale : on issuing from the Lake it changes its name, and is called the End, Eyne, or Enna. It falls into the sea a little below Egremont.

Hanging in the open air—but, O good Sir,
This is sad talk—they'll never sound for him—
Living or dead. When last we heard of him,
He was in slavery among the Moors
Upon the Barbary coast.—T was not a little
That would bring down his spirit; and no doubt,
Before it ended in his death, the Youth
Was sadly crossed.—Poor Leonard! when we
parted,

He took me by the hand, and said to me,
If e'er he should grow rich, he would return
To live in peace upon his father's land,
And lay his bones among us.

Leonard. If that day
Should come, 't would needs be a glad day for him;
He would himself, no doubt, be happy then
As any that should meet him—

Priest. Happy! Sir—
Leonard. You said his kindred all were in their
graves,

And that he had one Brother—

Priest. That is but
A fellow-tale of sorrow. From his youth
James, though not sickly, yet was delicate;
And Leonard being always by his side,
Had done so many offices about him,
That, though he was not of a timid nature,
Yet still the spirit of a mountain-boy
In him was somewhat checked; and, when his
Brother
Was gone to sea, and he was left alone,
The little color that he had was soon
Stolen from his cheek; he drooped, and pined, and
pined—

Leonard. But these are all the graves of full-grown men !

Priest. Aye, Sir, that passed away : we took him to us ;

He was the child of all the dale—he lived
Three months with one, and six months with another ;
And wanted neither food, nor clothes, nor love ;
And many, many happy days were his.
But, whether blithe or sad, 't is my belief
His absent Brother still was at his heart.
And, when he dwelt beneath our roof, we found
(A practice till this time unknown to him)
That often, rising from his bed at night,
He in his sleep would walk about, and sleeping
He sought his brother Leonard.—You are moved !
Forgive me, Sir : before I spoke to you,
I judged you most unkindly.

Leonard. But this Youth,
How did he die at last ?

Priest. One sweet May-morning
(It will be twelve years since when Spring returns),
He had gone forth among the new-dropped lambs,
With two or three companions whom their course
Of occupation led from height to height
Under a cloudless sun—till he, at length,
Through weariness, or haply, to indulge
The humor of the moment, lagged behind.
You see yon precipice ;—it wears the shape
Of a vast building made of many crags ;
And in the midst is one particular rock
That rises like a column from the vale,
Whence by our shepherds it is called, THE PILLAR.
Upon its aëry summit crowned with heath,
The loiterer, not unnoticed by his comrades,

Lay stretched at ease ; but, passing by the place
On their return, they found that he was gone.
No ill was feared ; till one of them by chance
Entering, when evening was far spent, the house
Which at that time was James's home, there learned
That nobody had seen him all that day :
The morning came, and still he was unheard of :
The neighbors were alarmed, and to the brook
Some hastened ; some ran to the lake : ere noon
They found him at the foot of that same rock
Dead, and with mangled limbs. The third day after
I buried him, poor Youth, and there he lies !

Leonard. And that, then, is his grave !—Before
his death

You say that he saw many happy years ?

Priest. Aye, that he did—

Leonard. And all went well with him ?—

Priest. If he had one, the youth had twenty homes.

Leonard. And you believe, then, that his mind
was easy ?—

Priest. Yes, long before he died, he found that
time

Is a true friend to sorrow ; and unless
His thoughts were turned on Leonard's luckless
fortune,

He talked about him with a cheerful love.

Leonard. He could not come to an unhallowed end !

Priest. Nay, God forbid !—You recollect I men-
tioned

A habit which disquietude and grief
Had brought upon him ; and we all conjectured
That, as the day was warm, he had lain down
On the soft heath,—and, waiting for his comrades,
He there had fallen asleep ; that in his sleep

He to the margin of the precipice
Had walked, and from the summit had fallen head-
long :

And so no doubt he perished. When the Youth
Fell, in his hand he must have grasp'd, we think,
His shepherd's staff; for on that Pillar of rock
It had been caught midway; and there for years
It hung;—and mouldered there.

The Priest here ended—
The Stranger would have thanked him, but he felt
A gushing from his heart, that took away
The power of speech. Both left the spot in silence;
And Leonard, when they reached the church-yard
gate,

As the Priest lifted up the latch, turned round,—
And, looking at the grave, he said, “ My Brother!”
The Vicar did not hear the words: and now,
He pointed towards his dwelling-place, entreating
That Leonard would partake his homely fare:
The other thanked him with an earnest voice;
But added, that the evening being calm,
He would pursue his journey. So they parted.

It was not long ere Leonard reached a grove
That overhung the road: he there stopped short,
And, sitting down beneath the trees, reviewed
All that the Priest had said: his early years
Were with him:—his long absence, cherished hopes,
And thoughts which had been his an hour before,
All pressed on him with such a weight, that now,
This vale, where he had been so happy, seemed
A place in which he could not bear to live:
So he relinquished all his purposes.

He travelled back to Egremont : and thence,
That night he wrote a letter to the Priest,
Reminding him of what had passed between them ;
And adding, with a hope to be forgiven,
That it was from the weakness of his heart
He had not dared to tell him who he was.
This done, he went on shipboard, and is now
A Seaman, a grey-headed Mariner.

1600.

SONNET.

TO SLEEP.

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one ; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring ; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky ;
I have thought of all by turns, and yet do lie
Sleepless ! and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees ;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep ! by any stealth :
So do not let me wear to-night away :
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth ?
Come, blessed barrier between day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health !

THE IDIOT BOY.

'TIS eight o'clock,—a clear March night,
The moon is up,—the sky is blue,
The owllet, in the moonlight air,
Shouts from nobody knows where ;
He lengthens out his lonely shout,
Halloo ! halloo ! a long halloo !

—Why bustle thus about your door,
What means this bustle, Betty Foy ?
Why are you in this mighty fret ?
And why on horseback have you set
Him whom you love, your Idiot Boy ?

Scarcely a soul is out of bed ;
Good Betty, put him down again ;
His lips with joy they burr at you ;
But, Betty ! what has he to do
With stirrup, saddle, or with rein ?

But Betty's bent on her intent ;
For her good neighbor, Susan Gale,
Old Susan, she who dwells alone,
Is sick, and makes a piteous moan,
As if her very life would fail.

There 's not a house within a mile,
No hand to help them in distress ;
Old Susan lies a-bed in pain,
And sorely puzzled are the twain
For what she ails they cannot guess.

And Betty's husband 's at the wood,
Where by the week he doth abide,
A woodman in the distant vale ;
There 's none to help poor Susan Gale ;
What must be done ? what will bethide ?

And Betty from the lane has fetched
Her Pony, that is mild and good ;
Whether he be in joy or pain,
Feeding at will along the lane,
Or bringing faggots from the wood.

And he is all in travelling trim,—
And, by the moonlight, Betty Foy
Has on the well-girt saddle set
(The like was never heard of yet)
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And he must post without delay
Across the bridge and through the dale,
And by the church, and o'er the down,
To bring a Doctor from the town,
Or she will die, old Susan Gale.

There is no need of boot or spur,
There is no need of whip or wand ;
For Johnny has his holly-bough,
And with a *hurly-burly* now
He shakes the green bough in his hand.

And Betty o'er and o'er has told
The Boy, who is her best delight,
Both what to follow, what to shun,
What do, and what to leave undone,
How turn to left, and how to right.

And Betty's most especial charge
Was, "Johnny! Johnny! mind that you
Come home again, nor stop at all.—
Come home again, whate'er befall !
My Johnny, do, I pray you do."

To this did Johnny answer make
Both with his head and with his hand,
And proudly shook the bridle too ;
And then ! his words were not a few,
Which Betty well could understand.

And now that Johnny is just going,
Though Betty 's in a mighty flurry,
She gently pats the Pony's side,
On which her Idiot boy must ride,
And seems no longer in a hurry.

But when the Pony moved his legs,
Oh ! then for the poor Idiot Boy !
For joy he cannot hold the bridle,
For joy his head and heels are idle,
He 's idle all for very joy.

And while the Pony moves his legs,
In Johnny's left hand you may see
The green bough motionless and dead :
The Moon that shines above his head
Is not more still and mute than he.

His heart it was so full of glee,
That till full fifty yards were gone,
He quite forgot his holly whip,
And all his skill in horsemanship :
Oh ! happy, happy, happy John.

And while the Mother, at the door,
Stands fixed, her face with joy o'erflows,
Proud of herself, and proud of him,
She sees him in his travelling trim,
How quietly her Johnny goes.

The silence of her Idiot Boy,
What hopes it sends to Betty's heart !
He 's at the guide-post—he turns right ;
She watches till he 's out of sight,
And Betty will not then depart.

Burr, burr—now Johnny's lips they burr,
As loud as any mill, or near it ;
Meek as a lamb the Pony moves,
And Johnny makes the noise he loves,
And Betty listens, glad to hear it.

Away she hies to Susan Gale :
Her Messenger 's in merry tune ;
The owlets hoot, the owlets curr,
And Johnny's lips they burr, burr, burr,
As on he goes beneath the moon.

His steed and he right well agree ;
For of this Pony there 's a rumor
That, should he lose his eyes and ears,
And should he live a thousand years,
He never will be out of humor.

But then he is a horse that thinks !
And when he thinks, his pace is slack ;
Now, tho' he knows poor Johnny well,
Yet, for his life, he cannot tell
What he has got upon his back.

So through the moonlight lanes they go,
 And far into the moonlight dale,
 And by the church, and o'er the down,
 To bring a Doctor from the town,
 To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And Betty now, at Susan's side,
 Is in the middle of her story,
 What speedy help her Boy will bring,
 With many a most diverting thing,
 Of Johnny's wit, and Johnny's glory.

And Betty, still at Susan's side,
 By this time is not quite so flurried ;
 Demure with porringer and plate
 She sits, as if in Susan's fate
 Her life and soul were buried.

But Betty, poor good woman ! she,
 You plainly in her face may read it,
 Could lend out of that moment's store
 Five years of happiness or more
 To any that might need it.

But yet I guess that now and then
 With Betty all was not so well ;
 And to the road she turns her ears,
 And thence full many a sound she hears,
 Which she to Susan will not tell.

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans ;
 " As sure as there 's a moon in heaven,"
 Cries Betty, " he 'll be back again ;
 They 'll both be here—'t is almost ten—
 Both will be here before eleven."

Poor Susan moans, poor Susan groans ;
The clock gives warning for eleven ;
'T is on the stroke—"He must be near,"
Quoth Betty, "and will soon be here,
As sure as there's a moon in heaven."

The clock is on the stroke of twelve,
And Johnny is not yet in sight;
—The Moon's in heaven, as Betty sees,
But Betty is not quite at ease ;
And Susan has a dreadful night.

And Betty, half an hour ago,
On Johnny vile reflections cast ;
"A little idle sauntering Thing!"
With other names, an endless string ;
But now that time is gone and past.

And Betty's drooping at the heart,
That happy time all past and gone,
"How can it be he is so late ?
The Doctor he has made him wait ;
Susan ! they'll both be here anon."

And Susan's growing worse and worse,
And Betty's in a sad *quandary* ;
And then there's nobody to say
If she must go, or she must stay !
She's in a sad *quandary*.

The clock is on the stroke of one ;
But neither Doctor nor his Guide
Appears along the moonlight road ;
There's neither horse nor man abroad,
And Betty's still at Susan's side.

And Susan now begins to fear
Of sad mischances not a few,
That Johnny may perhaps be drowned ;
Or lost, perhaps, and never found ;
Which they must both for ever rue.

She prefaced half a hint of this
With " God forbid it should be true ! "
At the first word that Susan said,
Cried Betty, rising from the bed,
" Susan, I 'd gladly stay with you.

I must be gone, I must away :
Consider, Johnny 's but half wise ;
Susan, we must take care of him,
If he is hurt in life or limb"—
" Oh God forbid !" poor Susan cries.

" What can I do ? " says Betty, going,
" What can I do to ease your pain ?
Good Susan tell me, and I 'll stay ;
I fear you 're in a dreadful way,
But I shall soon be back again."

" Nay, Betty, go ! good Betty, go !
There 's nothing that can ease my pain."
Then off she hies ; but with a prayer
That God poor Susan's life would spare,
Till she comes back again.

So, through the moonlight lane she goes,
And far into the moonlight dale ;
And how she ran and how she walked,
And all that to herself she talked,
Would surely be a tedious tale.

In high and low, above, below,
In great and small, in round and square,
In tree and tower was Johnny seen,
In bush and brake, in black and green;
'T was Johnny, Johnny, everywhere.

And while she crossed the bridge, there came
A thought with which her heart is sore—
Johnny perhaps his horse forsook,
To hunt the moon within the brook
And never will be heard of more.

Now is she high upon the down,
Alone amid a prospect wide;
There's neither Johnny nor his Horse
Among the fern or in the gorse;
There's neither Doctor nor his Guide.

" Oh saints! what is become of him?
Perhaps he's climbed into an oak,
Where he will stay till he is dead;
Or, sadly he has been misled,
And joined the wandering gipsy-folk.

Or him that wicked Pony's carried
To the dark cave, the goblin's hall;
Or in the castle he's pursuing
Among the ghosts his own undoing;
Or playing with the waterfall."

At poor old Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away;
" If Susan had not been so ill,
Alas! I should have had him still,
My Johnny, till my dying-day."

Poor Betty, in this sad distemper,
The Doctor's self could hardly spare;
Unworthy things she talked, and wild;
Even he, of cattle the most mild
The Pony had his share.

But now she 's fairly in the town,
And to the Doctor's door she hies;
'T is silence all on every side;
The town so long, the town so wide,
Is silent as the skies.

And now she 's at the Doctor's door,
She lifts the knocker, rap, rap, rap;
The Doctor at the casement shows
His glimmering eyes that peep and doze!
And one hand rubs his old night-cap.

" Oh Doctor ! Doctor ! where's my Johnny ?"
" I'm here, what is't you want with me ?"
" Oh Sir ! you know I 'm Betty Foy,
And I have lost my poor dear Boy,
You know him—him you often see ;

He 's not so wise as some folks be :"
" The devil take his wisdom !" said
The Doctor, looking somewhat grim,
" What woman ! should I know of him ?"
And, grumbling, he went back to bed !

" O woe is me ! O woe is me !
Here will I die; here will I die;
I thought to find my lost one here,
But he is neither far nor near,
Oh ! what a wretched Mother I !"

She stops, she stands, she looks about;
Which way to turn she cannot tell.
Poor Betty ! it would ease her pain
If she had heart to knock again ;
—The clock strikes three—a dismal knell !

Then up along the town she hies,
No wonder if her senses fail ;
This piteous news so much it shocked her,
She quite forgot to send the Doctor
To comfort poor old Susan Gale.

And now she 's high upon the down,
And she can see a mile of road ;
“ O cruel ! I 'm almost threescore ;
Such night as this was ne'er before,
There 's not a single soul abroad.”

She listens, but she cannot hear
The foot of horse, the voice of man ;
The streams with softest sound are flowing,
The grass you almost hear it growing,
You hear it now, if e'er you can.

The owlets through the long blue night
Are shouting to each other still ;
Fond lovers ! yet not quite hob nob,
They lengthen out the tremulous sob,
That echoes far from hill to hill.

Poor Betty now has lost all hope,
Her thoughts are bent on deadly sin,
A green-grown pond she just has past,
And from the brink she hurries fast,
Lest she should drown herself therein.

And now she sits her down and weeps ;
Such tears she never shed before ;
“ Oh dear, dear Pony ! my sweet joy
Oh carry back my Idiot Boy !
And we'll ne'er o'erload thee more.”

A thought is come into her head :
The Pony he is mild and good,
And we have always used him well ;
Perhaps he 's gone along the dell,
And carried Johnny to the wood.

Then up she springs as if on wings ;
She thinks no more of deadly sin ;
If Betty fifty ponds should see,
The last of all her thoughts would be
To drown herself therein.

O Reader ! now that I might tell
What Johnny and his horse are doing !
What they 've been doing all this time,
Oh could I put it into rhyme,
A most delightful tale pursuing !

Perhaps, and no unlikely thought !
He with his Pony now doth roam
The cliffs and peaks so high that are,
To lay his hands upon a star,
And in his pocket bring it home.

Perhaps he turn'd himself about,
His face unto his horse's tail,
And, still and mute, in wonder lost,
All silent as a horseman-ghost,
He travels slowly down the vale.

And now, perhaps, is hunting sheep
A fierce and dreadful hunter he ;
Yon valley, now so trim and green,
In five months' time, should he be seen,
A desert wilderness will be !

Perhaps, with head and heels on fire,
And like the very soul of evil,
He's galloping away, away,
And so will gallop on for aye,
The bane of all that dread the devil !

I to the Muses have been bound
These fourteen years, by strong indentures :
O gentle Muses ! let me tell
But half of what to him befel ;
He surely met with strange adventures.

O gentle Muses ! is this kind ?
Why will ye thus my suit repel ?
Why of your further aid bereave me ?
And can ye thus unfriended leave me :
Ye Muses ! whom I love so well ?

Who 's yon, that, near the waterfall,
Which thunders down with headlong force,
Beneath the moon, yet shining fair,
As careless as if nothing were,
Sits upright on a feeding horse ?

Unto his horse—there feeding free,
He seems, I think, the rein to give ;
Of moon or stars he takes no heed ;
Of such we in romances read,
—'Tis Johnny ! Johnny ! as I live.

And that 's the very Pony, too!
Where is she, where is Betty Foy ?
She hardly can sustain her fears ;
The roaring waterfall she hears,
And cannot find her Idiot Boy.

Your Pony 's worth his weight in gold ;
Then calm your terrors, Betty Foy !
She 's coming from among the trees,
And now all full in view she sees
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy.

And Betty sees the Pony too :
Why stand you thus, good Betty Foy ?
It is no goblin, 't is no ghost,
'T is he whom you so long have lost,
He whom you love, your Idiot Boy.

She looks again—her arms are up—
She screams—she cannot move for joy;
She darts, as with a torrent's force,
She almost has o'erturned the Horse,
And fast she holds her Idiot Boy.

And Johnny burrs and laughs aloud ;
Whether in cunning or in joy
I cannot tell ; but while he laughs,
Betty a drunken pleasure quaffs
To hear again her Idiot Boy.

And now she 's at the Pony's tail,
And now is at the Pony's head,—
On that side now, and now on this ;
And, almost stifled with her bliss,
A few sad tears does Betty shed.

She kisses o'er and o'er again
Him whom she loves, her Idiot Boy;
She's happy here, is happy there,
She is uneasy everywhere;
Her limbs are all alive with joy.

She pats the Pony, where or when
She knows not, happy Betty Foy!
The little Pony glad may be,
But he is milder far than she,
You hardly can perceive his joy.

"Oh! Johnny, never mind the Doctor;
You've done your best, and that is all:"
She took the reins, when this was said,
And gently turned the Pony's head,
From the loud waterfall.

By this the stars were almost gone,
The moon was setting on the hill,
So pale you scarcely looked at her:
The little birds began to stir,
Though yet their tongues were still.

The Pony, Betty, and her Boy,
Wind slowly through the woody dale;
And who is she, betimes abroad,
That hobbles up the steep rough road?
Who is it but old Susan Gale?

Long time lay Susan lost in thought;
And many dreadful fears beset her,
Both for her Messenger and Nurse;
And as her mind grew worse and worse,
Her body—it grew better.

She turned, she tossed herself in bed,
On all sides doubts and terrors met her ;
Point after point did she discuss ;
And while her mind was fighting thus,
Her body still grew better.

“ Alas ! what is become of them ?
These fears can never be endured ;
I 'll to the wood.”—The word scarce said,
Did Susan rise up from her bed,
As if by magic cured.

Away she goes up hill and down,
And to the wood at length is come ;
She spies her Friends, she shouts a greeting ;
Oh me ! it is a merry meeting
As ever was in Christendom.

The owls have hardly sung their last,
While our four travellers homeward wend ;
The owls have hooted all night long,
And with the owls began my song,
And with the owls must end.

For while they all were travelling home,
Cried Betty, “ Tell us, Johnny, do,
Where all this long night you have been,
What you have heard, what you have seen ;
And, Johnny, mind you tell us true.”

Now Johnny all night long had heard
The owls in tuneful concert strive ;
No doubt too he the moon had seen ;
For in the moonlight he had been
From eight o'clock till five.

And thus, to Betty's question, he
Made answer, like a traveller bold
(His very words I give to you),
"The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo,
And the sun did shine so cold !"
—Thus answered Johnny in his glory,
And that was all his travel's story.

SONNET.

HER only pilot the soft breeze, the boat
Lingers, but Fancy is well satisfied ;
With keen-eyed Hope, with Memory, at her side,
And the glad Muse at liberty to note
All that to each is precious, as we float
Gently along ; regardless who shall chide
If the heavens smile, and leave us free to glide,
Happy Associates breathing air remote
From trivial cares. But, Fancy and the Muse,
Why have I crowded this small bark with you
And others of your kind, ideal crew !
While here sits One, whose brightness owes its hues
To flesh and blood ; no Goddess from above,
No fleeting Spirit, but my own true Love !

PRESENTIMENTS.

PRESENTIMENTS! they judge not right
Who deem that ye from open light
Retire in fear of shame;
All *heaven-born* Instincts shun the touch
Of vulgar sense,—and, being such,
Such privilege ye claim.

The tear whose source I could not guess,
The deep sigh that seemed fatherless,
Were mine in early days;
And now, unforced by time to part
With fancy, I obey my heart,
And venture on your praise.

What though some busy foes to good,
Too potent over nerve and blood,
Lurk near you—and combine
To taint the health which ye infuse;
This hides not from the moral Muse,
Your origin divine.

How oft from you, derided Powers!
Comes faith that in auspicious hours
Builds castles not of air;
Bodings unsanctioned by the will
Flow from your visionary skill,
And teach us to beware.

The bosom-weight, your stubborn gift,
That no philosophy can lift,
Shall vanish, if ye please,
Like morning mist: and, where it lay,
The spirits at your bidding play
In gaiety and ease.

Star-guided contemplations move
Through space, through calm, not raised above
Prognostics that ye rule ;
The naked Indian of the wild,
And haply, too, the cradled Child,
Are pupils of your school.

But who can fathom your intents,
Number their signs or instruments ?
A rainbow, a sunbeam,
A subtle smell that Spring unbinds,
Dead pause abrupt of midnight winds,
An echo, or a dream.

The laughter of the Christmas hearth
With sighs of self-exhausted mirth
Ye feelingly reprove
And daily in the conscious breast,
Your visitations are a test
And exercise of love.

When some great change gives boundless
scope
To an exulting Nation's hope,
Oft, startled and made wise
By your low-breathed interpretings,
The simply meek foretaste the springs
Of bitter contraries.

Ye daunt the proud array of war,
Pervade the lonely ocean far
As sail hath been unfurled ;
For dancers in the festive hall
What ghastly partners hath your call
Fetched from the shadowy world.

'T is said, that warnings ye dispense,
Emboldened by a keener sense ;
That men have lived for whom,
With dread precision, ye made clear
The hour that in a distant year
Should knell them to the tomb.

Unwelcome insight ! Yet there are
Blest times when mystery is laid bare,
Truth shows a glorious face,
While on that isthmus which commands
The councils of both worlds, she stands,
Sage spirits ! by your grace.

God, who instructs the brutes to scent
All changes of the element,
Whose wisdom fixed the scale
Of natures, for our wants provides,
By higher, sometimes humbler, guides,
When lights of reason fail.

1800.

MEMORY.

A PEN—to register ; a key—
That winds through secret wards ;
Are well assigned to memory
By allegoric Bards.

As aptly, also, might be given
A Pencil to her hand ;
That, softening objects, sometimes even
Outstrips the heart's demand ;

That smoothes foregone distress, the lines
Of lingering care subdues,
Long-vanished happiness refines,
And clothes in brighter hues ;

Yet, like a tool of Fancy, works
Those Spectres to dilate
That startle Conscience, as she lurks
Within her lonely seat.

O ! that our lives, which flee so fast,
In purity were such,
That not an image of the past
Should fear that pencil's touch !

Retirement then might hourly look
Upon a soothing scene,
Age steal to his allotted nook
Contented and serene ;

With heart as calm as lakes that sleep,
In frosty moonlight glistening ;
Or mountain rivers, where they creep
Along a channel smooth and deep,
To their own far-off murmurs listening.

1822.

THE RUSSIAN FUGITIVE.

PART I.

ENOUGH of rose-bud lips and eyes
Like harebells bathed in dew,
Of cheek that with carnation vies,
And veins of violet hue ;

Earth wants not beauty that may scorn
 A likening to frail flowers;
Yea, to the stars, if they were born
 For seasons and for hours.

Through Moscow's gates, with gold unbarred,
 Stepped one at dead of night,
Whom such high beauty could not guard
 From meditated blight;
By stealth she passed, and fled as fast
 As doth the hunted fawn,
Nor stopped, till in the dappling east
 Appeared unwelcome dawn.

Seven days she lurked in brake and field,
 Seven nights her course renewed,
Sustained by what her scrip might yield,
 Or berries of the wood;
At length in darkness travelling on,
 When lowly doors were shut,
The haven of her hope she won,
 Her Foster-mother's hut.

"To put your love to dangerous proof
 I come," said she, "from far;
For I have left my Father's roof,
 In terror of the Czar."
No answer did the Matron give,
 No second look she cast,
But hung upon the Fugitive,
 Embracing and embraced.

She led the Lady to a seat
 Beside the glimmering fire,
Bathed duteously her wayworn feet,
 Prevented each desire:—

The cricket chirped, the house-dog dozed,
 And on that simple bed,
 Where she in childhood had reposed,
 Now rests her weary head.

When she, whose couch had been the sod,
 Whose curtain, pine or thorn,
 Had breathed a sigh of thanks to God,
 Who comforts the forlorn;
 While over her the Matron bent,
 Sleep sealed her eyes and stole
 Feeling from limbs with travel spent,
 And trouble from the soul.

Refreshed, the Wanderer rose at morn,
 And soon again was dight
 In those unworthy vestments worn
 Through long and perilous flight;
 And "O beloved Nurse," she said,
 " My thanks with silent tears
 Have unto Heaven and You been paid:
 Now listen to my fears !

"Have you forgot"—and here she smiled—
 "The babbling flatteries
 You lavished on me when a child
 Disporting round your knees ?
 I was your lambkin, and your bird,
 Your star, your gem, your flower;
 Light words, that were more lightly heard
 In many a cloudless hour !

"The blossom you so fondly praised
 Is come to bitter fruit;
 A mighty One upon me gazed;
 I spurned his lawless suit,

And must be hidden from his wrath :
 You, Foster-father dear,
Will guide me in my forward path ;
 I may not tarry here !

“ I cannot bring to utter woe
 Your proved fidelity.”—
“ Dear Child, sweet Mistress, say not so !
 For you we both would die.”
“ Nay, nay, I come with semblance feigned
 And cheek embrowned by art ;
Yet, being inwardly unstained,
 With courage will depart.”

“ But whither would you, could you, fleet ?
 A poor Man’s counsel take ;
The Holy Virgin gives to me
 A thought for your dear sake ;
Rest, shielded by our Lady’s grace,
 And soon shall you be led
Forth to a safe abiding-place,
 Where never foot doth tread.”

P A R T I I .

THE dwelling of this faithful pair
 In a straggling village stood,
For One who breathed unquiet air,
 A dangerous neighborhood ;
But wide around lay forest ground,
 With thickets rough and blind ;
And pine-trees made a heavy shade
 Impervious to the wind.

And there sequestered from the sight,
Was spread a treacherous swamp,
On which the noon-day sun shed light
As from a lonely lamp;
And midway in the unsafe morass
A single Island rose,
Of firm dry ground, with healthful grass
Adorned, and shady boughs.

The Woodman knew, for such the craft
This Russian vassal plied,
That never fowler's gun, nor shaft
Of archer there was tried;
A sanctuary seemed the spot
From all intrusion free;
And there he planned an artful Cot
For perfect secresy.

With earnest pains unchecked by dread
Of Power's far-stretching hand,
The bold good Man his labor sped
At Nature's pure command;
Heart-soothed, and busy as a wren,
While, in a hollow nook,
She moulds her sight-eluding den
Above a murmuring brook.

His task accomplished to his mind,
The twain ere break of day
Creep forth, and through the forest wind
Their solitary way;
Few words they speak, nor dare to slack
Their pace from mile to mile,
Till they have crossed the quaking marsh,
And reached the lonely Isle.

The sun above the pine-trees showed
 A bright and cheerful face ;
 And Ina looked for her abode,
 The promised hiding-place ;
 She sought in vain, the Woodman smiled ;
 No threshold could be seen,
 Nor roof, nor window ;—all seemed wild
 As it had ever been.

Advancing, you might guess an hour,
 'The front with such nice care
 Is masked, " if house it be or bower,"
 But in they entered are ;
 As shaggy as were wall and roof
 With branches intertwined,
 So smooth was all within, air-proof,
 And delicately lined :

And hearth was there, and maple dish,
 And cups in seemly rows,
 And couch—all ready to a wish
 For nurture or repose ;
 And Heaven doth to her virtue grant
 That here she may abide
 In solitude, with every want
 By cautious love supplied.

No queen, before a shouting crowd,
 Led on in bridal state,
 E'er struggled with a heart so proud,
 Entering her palace gate ;
 Rejoiced to bid the world farewell,
 No saintly anchoress
 E'er took possession of her cell
 With deeper thankfulness.

"Father of all, upon thy care
 And mercy am I thrown;
 Be thou my safeguard!"—such her prayer
 When she was left alone,
 Kneeling amid the wilderness
 When joy had passed away,
 And smiles, fond efforts of distress
 To hide what they betray!

The prayer is heard, the Saints have seen,
 Diffused through form and face,
 Resolves devotedly serene;
 That monumental grace
 Of Faith, which doth all passions tame
 That Reason *should* control;
 And shows in the untrembling frame
 A statue of the soul.

PART III.

'Tis sung in ancient minstrelsy
 That Phoebus wont to wear
 The leaves of any pleasant tree
 Around his golden hair;
 Till Daphne, desperate with pursuit
 Of his imperious love,
 At her own prayer transformed, took root,
 A laurel in the grove.

Then did the Penitent adorn
 His brow with laurel green
 And 'mid his bright locks never shorn
 No meaner leaf was seen;

And poets sage, through every age,
About their temples wound
The bay ; and conquerors thanked the
Gods,
With laurel chaplets crowned.

Into the mists of fabling Time
So far runs back the praise
Of Beauty, that despairs to climb
Along forbidden ways ;
That scorns temptation ; power defies
Where mutual love is not ;
And to the tomb for rescue flies
When life would be a blot.

To this fair Votress, a fate
More mild doth Heaven ordain
Upon her Island desolate ;
And words not breathed in vain
Might tell what intercourse she found,
Her silence to endear ;
What birds she tamed, what flowers the
ground
Sent forth her peace to cheer.

To one mute Presence, above all,
Her soothed affections clung,
A picture on the cabin wall
By Russian usage hung—
The Mother-maid, whose countenance
bright
With love abridged the day ;
And, communed with by taper light,
Chased spectral fears away.

And oft, as either Guardian came,
The joy in that retreat
Might any common friendship shame,
So high their hearts would beat ;
And to the lone Recluse, whate'er
They brought, each visiting
Was like the crowding of the year
With a new burst of spring.

But when she of her Parents thought,
The pang was hard to bear ;
And, if with all things not enwrought,
That trouble still is near.
Before her flight she had not dared
Their constancy to prove,
Too much the heroic Daughter feared
The weakness of their love.

Dark is the past to them, and dark
The future still must be,
Till pitying Saints conduct her bark
Into a safer sea—
Or gentle Nature close her eyes,
And set her Spirit free
From the altar of this sacrifice,
In vestal purity.

Yet, when above the forest-glooms
The white swans southward passed,
High as the pitch of their swift plumes
Her fancy rode the blast ;
And bore her toward the fields of France,
Her Father's native land,
To mingle in the rustic dance,
The happiest of the band !

Of those beloved fields she oft
Had heard her Father tell
In phrase that now with echoes soft
Haunted her lonely cell ;
She saw the hereditary bowers,
She heard the ancestral stream ;
The Kremlin and its haughty towers
Forgotten like a dream !

PART IV.

The ever-changing Moon had traced
Twelve times her monthly round,
When through the unfrequented Waste
Was heard a startling sound ;
A shout thrice sent from one who chased
At speed a wounded deer,
Bounding through branches interlaced,
And where the wood was clear.

The fainting creature took the marsh,
And toward the Island fled,
While plovers screamed with tumult harsh
Above his antlered head ;
This Ina saw ; and, pale with fear,
Shrunk to her citadel ;
The desperate deer rushed on, and near
The tangled covert fell.

Across the marsh, the game in view,
The Hunter followed fast,
Nor paused, till o'er the stag he blew
A death-proclaiming blast ;

Then, resting on her upright mind,
Came forth the Maid—"In me
Behold," she said, "a stricken Hind
Pursued by destiny !

" From your deportment, Sir ! I deem
That you have worn a sword,
And will not hold in light esteem
A suffering woman's word ;
There is my covert, there perchance
I might have lain concealed,
My fortunes hid, my countenance
Not even to you revealed.

" Tears might be shed, and I might pray,
Crouching and terrified,
That what has been unveiled to-day,
You would in mystery hide ;
But I will not defile with dust
The knee that bends to adore
The God in heaven ;—attend, be just ;
This ask I, and no more !

" I speak not of the winter's cold,
For summer's heat exchanged,
While I have lodged in this rough hold,
From social life estranged ;
Nor yet of trouble and alarms ;
High Heaven is my defence ;
And every season has soft arms
For injured Innocence.

" From Moscow to the Wilderness
It was my choice to come,
Lest virtue should be harborless,
And honor want a home ;

And happy were I, if the Czar
 Retain his lawless will,
 To end life here like this poor deer,
 Or a lamb on a green hill."

"Are you the Maid," the Stranger cried,
 "From Gallic parents sprung,
 Whose vanishing was rumored wide,
 Sad theme for every tongue;
 Who foiled an Emperor's eager quest?
 You, Lady, forced to wear
 These rude habiliments, and rest
 Your head in this dark lair!"

But wonder, pity, soon were quelled;
 And in her face and mien
 The soul's pure brightness he beheld
 Without a veil between:
 He loved, he hoped—a holy flame
 Kindled 'mid rapturous tears;
 The passion of a moment came
 As on the wings of years.

"Such bounty is no gift of chance,"
 Exclaimed he; "righteous Heaven,
 Preparing your deliverance,
 To me the charge hath given.
 The Czar full oft in words and deeds
 Is stormy and self-willed;
 But, when the Lady Catherine pleads,
 His violence is stilled.

"Leave open to my wish the course,
 And I to her will go;
 From that humane and heavenly source,
 Good, only good, can flow."

Faint sanction given, the Cavalier
Was eager to depart,
Though question followed question, dear
To the Maiden's filial heart.

Light was his step,—his hopes, more light,
Kept pace with his desires :
And the fifth morning gave him sight
Of Moscow's glittering spires.
He sued :—heart-smitten by the wrong,
To the lorn Fugitive
The Emperor sent a pledge as strong
As sovereign power could give.

O more than mighty change ! If e'er
Amazement rose to pain,
And joy's excess produced a fear
Of something void and vain ;
'Twas when the Parents, who had mourned
So long the lost as dead,
Beheld their only Child returned,
The household floor to tread.

Soon gratitude gave way to love
Within the Maiden's breast
Delivered and Deliverer move
In bridal garments drest ;
Meek Catherine had her own reward ;
The Czar bestowed a dower ;
And universal Moscow shared
The triumph of that hour.

Flowers strewed the ground ; the nuptial feast
Was held with costly state ;
And there, 'mid many a noble guest,
The Foster-parents sate ;

Encouraged by the imperial eye,
They shrank not into shade;
Great was their bliss, the honor high
To them and nature paid !

SONNET.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO.

YES! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed;
For if of our affections none find grace
In sight of Heaven, then, wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit? Better plea
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
Who such divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose love dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour;
But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

GLAD sight wherever new with old
Is joined through some dear homebōrn tie; :
The life of all that we behold
Depends upon that mystery.
Vain is the glory of the sky,
The beauty vain of field and grove
Unless, while with admiring eye
We gaze, we also learn to love.

SONNETS UPON THE PUNISHMENT OF
DEATH.

I.

FIT retribution, by the moral code
Determined, lies beyond the State's embrace,
Yet, as she may, for each peculiar case
She plants well-measured terrors in the road
Of wrongful acts. Downward it is and broad,
And, the main fear once doomed to banishment,
Far oftener then, bad ushering worse event,
Blood would be spilt that in his dark abode
Crime might lie better hid. And, should the change
Take from the horror due to a foul deed,
Pursuit and evidence so far must fail,
And, guilt escaping, passion then might plead
In angry spirits for her old free range,
And the "wild justice of revenge" prevail.

II.

THOUGH to give timely warning and deter
Is one great aim of penalty, extend
Thy mental vision further and ascend
Far higher, else full surely shalt thou err.
What is a State? The wise behold in her
A creature born of time, that keeps one eye
Fixed on the statutes of Eternity,
To which her judgments reverently defer.
Speaking through Law's dispassionate voice the State
Endues her conscience with external life
And being, to preclude or quell the strife
Of individual will, to elevate
The grovelling mind, the erring to recal,
And fortify the moral sense of all.

III.

OUR bodily life, some plead, that life the shrine
Of an immortal spirit, is a gift
So sacred, so informed with light divine,
That no tribunal, though most wise to sift
Deed and intent, should turn the Being adrift
Into that world where penitential tear
May not avail, nor prayer have for God's ear
A voice—that world whose veil no hand can lift
For earthly sight. "Eternity and Time,"
They urge, "have interwoven claims and rights
Not to be jeopardized through foulest crime:
The sentence rule by mercy's heaven-born lights."
Even so; but measuring not by finite sense
Infinite Power, perfect Intelligence.

IV.

AH, think how one compelled for life to abide
Locked in a dungeon needs must eat the heart
Out of his own humanity, and part
With every hope that mutual cares provide;
And, should a less unnatural doom confide
In long-life exile on a savage coast,
Soon the relapsing penitent may boast
Of yet more heinous guilt, with fiercer pride.
Hence thoughtful Mercy, Mercy sage and pure,
Sanctions the forfeiture that Law demands.
Leaving the final issue in *His* hands
Whose goodness knows no change, whose love is
sure,
Who sees, foresees; who cannot judge amiss,
And wafts at will the contrite soul to bliss.

V.

SEE the Condemned alone within his cell
And prostrate at some moment when remorse
Stings to the quick, and with resistless force,
Assaults the pride she strove in vain to quell.
Then mark him, him who could so long rebel,
The crime confessed, a kneeling Penitent
Before the Altar, where the Sacrament
Softens his heart, till from his eyes outwell
Tears of salvation. Welcome death ! while Heaven
Does in this change exceedingly rejoice ;
While yet the solemn heed the State hath given
Helps him to meet the last Tribunal's Voice
In faith, which fresh offences, were he cast
On old temptations, might for ever blast.

VI.

CONCLUSION.

YES, though he well may tremble at the sound
Of his own voice, who from the judgment-seat
Sends the pale Convict to his last retreat
In death ; though listeners shudder all around,
They know the dread requital's source profound ;
Nor is, they feel, its wisdom obsolete—
(Would that it were !) the sacrifice unmeet
For Christian Faith. But hopeful signs abound ;
The social rights of man breathe purer air ;
Religion deepens her preventive care ;
Then, moved by needless fear of past abuse,
Strike not from Law's firm hand that awful rod,
But leave it thence to drop for lack of use :
Oh ! speed the blessed hour, Almighty God !

VII.

A P O L O G Y.

THE formal world relaxes his cold chain
 For One who speaks in numbers ; ampler scope
 His utterance finds ; and, conscious of the gain,
 Imagination works with bolder hope
 The cause of grateful reason to sustain ;
 And, serving Truth, the heart more strongly beats
 Against all barriers which his labor meets
 In lofty place, or humble Life's domain.
 Enough ;—before us lay a painful road,
 And guidance have I sought in dutious love
 From Wisdom's heavenly Father. Hence hath
 flowed
 Patience, with trust that, whatsoe'er the way
 Each takes in this high matter, all may move
 Cheered with the prospect of a brighter day.

1840.

EVENING VOLUNTARIES.

I.

COMPOSED BY THE SEA SHORE.

WHAT mischief cleaves to unsubdued regret
 How fancy sickens by vague hopes beset ;
 How baffled projects on the spirit prey,
 And fruitless wishes eat the heart away,
 The Sailor knows ; he best, whose lot is cast
 On the relentless sea that holds him fast
 On chance dependent, and the fickle star
 Of power, through long and melancholy war.

O sad it is, in sight of foreign shores,
 Daily to think on old familiar doors,
 Hearths loved in childhood, and ancestral floors ;
 Or, tossed about along a waste of foam,
 To ruminant on that delightful home
 Which with the dear Betrothed *was* to come ;
 Or came and was and is, yet meets the eye
 Never but in the world of memory ;
 Or in a dream recalled, whose smoothest range
 Is crossed by knowledge, or by dread, of change,
 And if not so, whose perfect joy makes sleep
 A thing too bright for breathing man to keep.
 Hail to the virtues which that perilous life
 Extracts from Nature's elemental strife ;
 And welcome glory won in battles fought
 As bravely as the foe was keenly sought.
 But to each gallant captain and his crew
 A less imperious sympathy is due,
 Such as my verse now yields, while moonbeams play
 On the mute sea in this unruffled bay ;
 Such as will promptly flow from every breast,
 Where good men, disappointed in the quest
 Of wealth, and power, and honors, long for rest ;
 Or, having known the splendor of success,
 Sigh for the obscurities of happiness.

II.

THE Crescent-moon, the Star of Love,
 Glories of evening, as ye there are seen
 With but a span of sky between—
 Speak one of you, my doubts remove,
 Which is the attendant Page and which the Queen ?

III.

TO THE MOON.

(Composed by the sea side, on the Coast of Cumberland.)

WANDERER ! that stoop'st so low, and com'st so near
To human life's unsettled atmosphere ;
Who lov'st with Night and Silence to partake,
So might it seem, the cares of them that wake ;
And, through the cottage-lattice softly peeping,
Dost shield from harm the humblest of the sleeping ;
What pleasure once encompassed those sweet names
Which yet in thy behalf the Poet claims,
An idolizing dreamer as of yore !—
I slight them all ; and, on this sea-beat shore
Sole-sitting, only can to thoughts attend
That bid me hail thee as the SAILOR'S FRIEND ;
So call thee for heaven's grace through thee made
known
By confidence supplied and mercy shown,
When not a twinkling star or beacon's light
Abates the perils of a stormy night ;
And for less obvious benefits, that find
Their way, with thy pure help, to heart and mind ;
Both for the adventurer starting in life's prime ;
And veteran ranging round from clime to clime,
Long-baffled hope's slow fever in his veins,
And wounds and weakness oft his labor's sole re-
 mains.

The aspiring mountains and the winding Streams,
Empress of Night ! are gladdened by thy beams ;
A look of thine the wilderness pervades,
And penetrates the forest's inmost shades ;

Thou, chequering peaceably the minster's gloom,
Guid'st the pale Mourner to the lost one's tomb;
Canst reach the Prisoner—to his grated cell
Welcome, though silent and intangible!—
And lives there one, of all that come and go
On the great waters toiling to and fro,
One, who has watched thee at some quiet hour
Enthroned aloft in undisputed power,
Or crossed by vapory streaks and clouds that move
Catching the lustre they in part reprove—
Nor sometimes felt a fitness in thy sway
To call up thoughts that shun the glare of day,
And make the serious happier than the gay?

Yes, lovely Moon! if thou so mildly bright
Dost rouse, yet surely in thy own despite,
To fiercer mood the phrensy-stricken brain,
Let me a compensating faith maintain;
That there's a sensitive, a tender part
Which thou canst touch in every human heart,
For healing and composure.—But, as least
And mightiest billows ever have confessed
Thy domination; as the whole vast Sea
Feels through her lowest depths thy sovereignty;
So shines that countenance with especial grace
On them who urge the keel her *plains* to trace
Furrowing its way right onward. The most rude,
Cut off from home and country, may have stood—
Even till long gazing hath bedimmed his eye,
Or the mute rapture ended in a sigh—
Touched by accordance of thy placid cheer,
With some internal lights to memory dear,
Or fancies stealing forth to soothe the breast
Tired with its daily share of earth's unrest,—

Gentle awakenings, visitations meek ;
 A kindly influence whereof few will speak,
 Though it can wet with tears the hardiest cheek.

And when thy beauty in the shadowy cave
 Is hidden, buried in its monthly grave ;
 Then, while the Sailor, mid an open sea
 Swept by a favoring wind that leaves thought free,
 Paces the deck—no star perhaps in sight,
 And nothing save the moving ship's own light
 To cheer the long dark hours of vacant night—
 Oft with his musings does thy image blend,
 In his mind's eye thy crescent horns ascend,
 And thou art still, O Moon ! that SAILOR'S FRIEND !

1835.

IV.
 TO THE MOON.

(Rydal.)

QUEEN of the stars!—so gentle, so benign,
 That ancient Fable did to thee assign,
 When darkness creeping o'er thy silver brow
 Warned thee these upper regions to forego,
 Alternate empire in the shades below—
 A Bard, who, lately near the wide-spread sea
 Traversed by gleaming ships, looked up to thee
 With grateful thoughts, doth now thy rising hail
 From the close confines of a shadowy vale.
 Glory of night, conspicuous yet serene,
 Nor less attractive when by glimpses seen
 Through cloudy umbrage, well might that fair face,
 And all those attributes of modest grace,
 In days when Fancy wrought unchecked by fear,

Down to the green earth fetch thee from thy sphere,
To sit in leafy woods by fountains clear !

O still belov'd (for thine, meek Power, are charms
That fascinate the very Babe in arms,
While he, uplifted towards thee, laughs outright,
Spreading his little palms in his glad Mother's sight)
O still belov'd, once worshipped ! Time, that frowns
In his destructive flight on earthly crowns,
Spares thy mild splendor ; still those far-shot beams
Tremble on dancing waves and rippling streams
With stainless touch, as chaste as when thy praise
Was sung by Virgin-choirs in festal lays ;
And through dark trials still dost thou explore
Thy way for increase punctual as of yore,
When teeming Matrons—yielding to rude faith
In mysteries of birth and life and death
And painful struggle and deliverance—prayed
Of thee to visit them with lenient aid.
What though the rites be swept away, the fanes
Extinct that echoed to the votive strains ;
Yet thy mild aspect does not, cannot cease
Love to promote and purity and peace ;
And Fancy, unreproved, even yet may trace
Faint types of suffering in thy beamless face.

Then, silent Monitress ! let us—not blind
To worlds unthought of till the searching mind
Of Science laid them open to mankind—
Told, also, how the voiceless heavens declare
God's glory ; and acknowledging thy share
In that blest charge ; let us—without offence
To aught of highest, holiest influence—
Receive whatever good 't is given thee to dispense.

May sage and simple, catching with one eye
 The moral intimations of the sky,
 Learn from thy course, where'er their own be taken,
 "To look on tempests and be never shaken;"
 To keep with faithful step the appointed way
 Eclipsing or eclipsed, by night or day,
 And from example of thy monthly range
 Gently to brook decline and fatal change;
 Meek, patient, steadfast, and with loftier scope,
 Than thy revival yields, for gladsome hope!

1836.

SONNET.

TO B. R. HAYDON.

HIGH is our calling, Friend!—Creative Art
 (Whether the instrument of words she use,
 Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues),
 Demands the service of a mind and heart,
 Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
 Heroically fashioned—to infuse
 Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
 While the old world seems adverse to desert.
 And oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
 Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
 Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
 And in the soul admit of no decay,
 Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness—
 Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

THE FORCE OF PRAYER.*

OR,

THE FOUNDING OF BOLTON PRIORY.

A Tradition.

“**W**hat is good for a bootless bane?”
With these dark words begins my Tale ;
And their meaning is, whence can comfort spring
When Prayer is of no avail ?

“**W**hat is good for a bootless bane?”
The Falconer to the Lady said ;
And she made answer, “**E**NDELESS SORROW!”
For she knew that her son was dead.

She knew it by the Falconer’s words,
And from the look of the Falconer’s eye ;
And from the love which was in her soul
For her youthful Romilly.

— Young Romilly through Barden woods
Is ranging high and low ;
And holds a greyhound in a leash,
To let slip upon buck or doe.

The pair have reached that fearful chasm,
How tempting to bestride
For lordly Wharf is there pent in
With rocks on either side.

This striding-place is called THE STRID,
A name which it took of yore ;
A thousand years hath it borne that name,
And shall a thousand more.

* See the White Doe of Rylstone.

And hither is young Romilly come,
 And what may now forbid
 That he, perhaps for the hundredth time,
 Shall bound across THE STRID ?

He sprang in glee,—for what cared he
 That the river was strong, and the rocks were
 steep ?—
 But the greyhound in the leash hung back,
 And checked him in his leap.

The Boy is in the arms of Wharf,
 And strangled by a merciless force ,
 For never more was young Romilly seen
 Till he rose a lifeless corse.

Now there is stillness in the vale,
 And long, unspeaking sorrow :
 Wharf shall be to pitying hearts
 A name more sad than Yarrow.

If for a lover the Lady wept,
 A solace she might borrow
 From death, and from the passion of death ;—
 Old Wharf might heal her sorrow.

She weeps not for the wedding-day
 Which was to be to-morrow :
 Her hope was a further-looking hope,
 And hers is a mother's sorrow.

He was a tree that stood alone,
 And proudly did its branches wave ;
 And the root of this delightful tree
 Was in her husband's grave !

Long, long in the darkness did she sit,
And her first words were, " Let there be
In Bolton, on the field of Wharf,
A stately Priory !"

The stately Priory was reared ;
And Wharf, as he moved along,
To matins joined a mournful voice,
Nor failed at even-song.

And the Lady prayed in heaviness,
That looked not for relief !
But slowly did her succor come,
And a patience to her grief.

Oh ! there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a timely end,
If but to God we turn, and ask
Of Him to be our friend !

1908.

TO JOANNA

A MID the smoke of cities did you pass
The time of early youth ; and there you learned,
From years of quiet industry, to love
The living Beings by your own fire-side,
With such a strong devotion, that your heart
Is slow to meet the sympathies of them
Who look upon the hills with tenderness,
And make dear friendship with the streams and
groves.
Yet we, who are transgressors in this kind,
Dwelling retired in our simplicity

Among the woods and fields, we love you well,
Joanna! and I guess, since you have been
So distant from us now for two long years,
That you will gladly listen to discourse,
However trivial, if you thence be taught
That they, with whom you once were happy, talk
Familiarly of you and of old times.

While I was seated, now some ten days past
Beneath those lofty firs, that overtop
Their ancient neighbor, the old steeple-tower,
The Vicar from his gloomy house hard by
Came forth to greet me ; and when he had asked
“ How fares Joanna, that wild-hearted Maid !
And when will she return to us ? ” he paused ;
And, after short exchange of village news,
He with grave looks demanded, for what cause,
Reviving obsolete idolatry,
I, like a Runic Priest, in characters
Of formidable size had chiselled out
Some uncouth name upon the native rock,
Above the Rotha, by the forest-side.
Now, by those dear immunities of heart
Engendered between malice and true love,
I was not loath to be so catechized,
And this was my reply :—“ As it befel
One summer morning we had walked abroad
At break of day, Joanna and myself.
—’T was that delightful season when the broom,
Full-flowered, and visible on every steep,
Along the copses runs in veins of gold.
Our pathway led us on to Rotha’s banks ;
And when we came in front of that tall rock
That eastward looks, I there stopped short—and stood

Tracing the lofty barrier with my eye
From base to summit; such delight I found
To note in shrub and tree, in stone and flower
That intermixture of delicious hues,
Along so vast a surface, all at once,
In one impression, by connecting force
Of their own beauty, imaged in the heart.
—When I had gazed perhaps two minutes' space,
Joanna, looking in my eyes, beheld
That ravishment of mine, and laughed aloud.
The Rock, like something starting from a sleep
Took up the Lady's voice, and laughed again;
That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
Was ready with her cavern; Hammar-scar,
And the tall Steep of Silver-how, sent forth
A noise of laughter; southern Louhrigg heard,
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone;
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
Carried the Lady's voice,—old Skiddaw blew
His speaking-trumpet;—back out of the clouds
Of Glarmara southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.
—Now whether (said I to our cordial Friend,
Who in the hey-day of astonishment
Smiled in my face) this were in simple truth
A work accomplished by the brotherhood
Of ancient mountains, or my ear was touched
With dreams and visionary impulses
To me alone imparted, sure I am
That there was a loud uproar in the hills.
And, while we both were listening, to my side
The fair Joanna drew, as if she wished
To shelter from some object of her fear.
—And hence, long afterwards, when eighteen moons

Were wasted, as I chanced to walk alone
 Beneath this rock, at sunrise, on a calm
 And silent morning, I sat down, and there,
 In memory of affections old and true,
 I chiselled out in those rude characters
 Joanna's name deep in the living stone:—
 And I, and all who dwell by my fireside,
 Have called the lovely rock, JOANNA'S ROCK.”*

1800.

SONNET.

IT is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
 The holy time is quiet as a Nun
 Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
 Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
 The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea
 Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
 And doth with his eternal motion make
 A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
 Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
 If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
 Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
 Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
 And worship'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
 God being with thee when we know it not.

* In Cumberland and Westmoreland are several inscriptions upon the native rock, which, from the wasting of time, and the rudeness of the workmanship, have been mistaken for Runic. They are without doubt Roman.

The Rotha, mentioned in this poem, is the River which, flowing through the lakes of Grasmere and Rydale, falls into Wynandermere. On Helmerag, that impressive single mountain at the head of the Vale of Grasmere, is a rock which from most points of view bears a striking resemblance to an old Woman cowering. Close by this rock is one of those fissures or caverns, which in the language of the country are called dungeons. Most of the mountains here mentioned immediately surround the Vale of Grasmere; of the others, some are at a considerable distance, but they belong to the same cluster.

TO A SEXTON.

LET thy wheel-barrow alone—
Wherefore, Sexton, piling still
In thy bone-house bone on bone?
'T is already like a hill
In a field of battle made,
Where three thousand skulls are laid;
These died in peace each with the other,—
Father, sister, friend, and brother.

Mark the spot to which I point!
From this platform, eight feet square,
Take not even a finger-joint:
Andrew's whole fire-side is there.
Here, alone, before thine eyes,
Simon's sickly daughter lies,
From weakness now, and pain defended,
Whom he twenty winters tended.

Look but at the gardener's pride—
How he glories, when he sees
Roses, lilies, side by side,
Violets in families!
By the heart of Man, his tears,
By his hopes and by his fears,
Thou, too, heedless art the Warden
Of a far superior garden.

Thus then, each to other dear,
Let them all in quiet lie,
Andrew there, and Susan here,
Neighbors in mortality.

And, should I live through sun and rain
Seven widowed years without my Jane,
O Sexton, do not then remove her,
Let one grave hold the Loved and Lover!

1799.

ODE.

COMPOSED ON MAY MORNING.

WHILE from the purpling east departs
The star that led the dawn,
Blithe Flora from her couch upstarts,
For May is on the lawn.
A quickening hope, a freshening glee,
Foreran the expected Power,
Whose first-drawn breath, from bush and tree,
Shakes off that pearly shower.

All Nature welcomes Her whose sway
Temps the year's extremes ;
Who scattereth lustres o'er noon-day,
Like morning's dewy gleams ;
While mellow warble, sprightly trill
The tremulous heart excite ;
And hums the balmy air to still
The balance of delight.

Time was, blest Power ! when youths and maids
At peep of dawn would rise,
And wander forth in forest glades
Thy birth to solemnize.
Though mute the song—to grace the rite
Untouched the hawthorn bough,
Thy Spirit triumphs o'er the slight ;
Man changes, but not Thou !

Thy feathered Lieges bill and wings
In Love's disport employ ;
Warmed by thy influence, creeping things
Awake to silent joy :
Queen art thou still for each gay plant
Where the slim wild deer roves,
And served in depths where fishes haunt
Their own mysterious groves.

Cloud-piercing peak, and trackless heath,
Instinctive homage pay ;
Nor wants the dim-lit cave a wreath
To honor thee, sweet May !
Where cities fanned by thy brisk airs
Behold a smokeless sky,
Their puniest flower-pot nursling dares
To open a bright eye.

And if, on this thy natal morn,
The pole, from which thy name
Hath not departed, stands forlorn
Of song and dance and game ;
Still from the village-green a vow
Aspires to thee address,
Wherever peace is on the brow,
Or love within the breast.

Yes ! where Love nestles thou canst teach
The soul to love the more ;
Hearts also shall thy lessons reach
That never loved before.
Stript is the haughty one of pride,
The bashful freed from fear,
While rising, like the ocean-tide,
In flows the joyous year.

Hush, feeble lyre! weak words refuse
The service to prolong!
To yon exulting-thrush the Muse
Intrusts the imperfect song;
His voice shall chant, in accents clear,
Throughout the live-long day,
Till the first silver star appear,
The sovereignty of May.

LIFE.

HAST thou seen, with flash incessant,
Bubbles gliding under ice,
Bodied forth and evanescent,
No one knows by what device?

Such are thoughts!—A wind-swept meadow
Mimicking a troubled sea,
Such is life; and death a shadow
From the rock eternity!

THE EXCURSION.

"*First Excursion*—the noblest poem in the English language, since
Milton's *Paradise Lost*." R. H. DANA.

"Wordsworth's Poetry stands distinct in the world. That which to
other men is an occasional pleasure, or possibly delight, and to other
poets an occasional transport, *the seeing this visible Universe*, is to
him, a Life—one Individual Human Life—namely, his Own—travelling
the whole journey from the cradle to the grave. And that Life—for
what else could he do with it?—he has verified—sung. And there is
no other such song." CHRISTOPHER NORTH, in BLACKWOOD.

TO THE

Right Honorable WILLIAM, EARL OF LONSDALE, K.G.

ETC. ETC.

Off, through thy fair domains, illustrious Peer!
In youth I roamed, on youthful pleasures bent
And mused in rocky cell or sylvan tent,
Beside swift-flowing Lowther's current clear.
—Now, by thy care befriended, I appear
Before thee LONSDALE, and this Work present,
A token (may it prove a monument!)
Of high respect and gratitude sincere,
Gladly would I have waited till my task
Had reached its close; but Life is insecure,
And Hope full oft fallacious as a dream:
Therefore, for what is here produced, I ask
Thy favor; trusting that thou wilt not deem
The offering, though imperfect, premature.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

EDMUND MOUNT, WESTMORELAND.

July 29, 1814.

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P R E F A C E
TO THE EDITION OF 1814.

THE Title-page announces that this is only a portion of a poem; and the reader must be here apprised that it belongs to the second part of a long and laborious Work, which is to consist of three parts. The Author will candidly acknowledge that, if the first of these had been completed, and in such a manner as to satisfy his own mind, he should have preferred the natural order of publication, and have given that to the world first; but, as the second division of the Work was designed to refer more to passing events, and to an existing state of things, than the others were meant to do, more continuous exertion was naturally bestowed upon it, and greater progress made here than in the rest of the poem; and as this part does not depend upon the preceding, to a degree which will materially injure its own peculiar interest, the Author, complying with the earnest entreaties of some valued Friends, presents the following pages to the Public.

It may be proper to state whence the poem, of which the Excursion is a part, derives its Title of **THE RECLUSE**.—Several years ago, when the author retired to his native mountains, with the hope of being enabled to

P R E F A C E .

construct a literary work that might live, it was a reasonable thing that he should take a review of his own mind, and examine how far Nature and Education had qualified him for such employment. As subsidiary to this preparation, he undertook to record, in verse, the origin and progress of his own powers, as far as he was acquainted with them. That Work, addressed to a dear Friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's Intellect is deeply indebted, has been long finished; and the result of the investigation which gave rise to it was a determination to compose a philosophical poem, containing views of Man, Nature, and Society; and to be entitled the Recluse; as having for its principal subject the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement. The preparatory poem is biographical, and conducts the history of the Author's mind to the point when he was emboldened to hope that his faculties were sufficiently matured for entering upon the arduous labor which he had proposed to himself; and the two Works have the same kind of relation to each other, if he may so express himself, as the ante-chapel has to the body of a gothic church. Continuing this allusion, he may be permitted to add, that his minor Pieces, which have been long before the Public, when they shall be properly arranged, will be found by the attentive Reader to have such connection with the main Work as may give them claim to be likened to the little cells, oratories, and sepulchral recesses, ordinarily included in those edifices.

The Author would not have deemed himself justified in saying, upon this occasion, so much of performances either unfinished, or unpublished, if he had not thought

that the labor bestowed by him upon what he has heretofore and now laid before the Public, entitled him to candid attention for such a statement as he thinks necessary to throw light upon his endeavors to please, and, he would hope, to benefit his countrymen. Nothing further need be added, than that the first and third parts of *The Recluse* will consist chiefly of meditations in the Author's own person; and that in the intermediate part (*The Excursion*) the intervention of characters speaking is employed, and something of a dramatic form adopted.

It is not the Author's intention formally to announce a system: it was more animating to him to proceed in a different course; and if he shall succeed in conveying to the mind clear thoughts, lively images, and strong feelings, the Reader will have no difficulty in extracting the system for himself. And in the meantime the following passage, taken from the conclusion of the first book of *The Recluse*, may be acceptable as a kind of *Prospectus* of the design and scope of the whole Poem.

‘On man, on Nature, and on Human Life,
Musing in solitude, I oft perceive
Fair trains of imagery before me rise,
Accompanied by feelings of delight
Pure, or with no unpleasing sadness mixed;
And I am conscious of affecting thoughts
And dear remembrances, whose presence soothes
Or elevates the Mind, intent to weigh
The good and evil of our mortal state.
—To these emotions, whencesoe'er they come,
Whether from breath of outward circumstance,
Or from the Soul—an impulse to herself—
I would give utterance in numerous verse.
Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope,

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And melancholy Fear subdued by Faith;
Or blessed consolations in distress;
Of moral strength, and intellectual Power;
Of joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual Mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence which governs all—
I sing—[—] if audience let me find though few?
So prayed, more gaining than he asked, the Bard
In holiest mood. Urania, I shall need
Thy guidance, or a greater Muse, if such
Decend to earth or dwell in highest heaven!
For I must tread on shadowy ground, must sink
Deep—and, aloft ascending, breathe in worlds
To which the heaven of heavens is but a veil.
All strength—all terror, single or in bands,
That ever was put forth in personal form—
Jehovah—with his thunder, and the choir
Of shouting Angels, and the empyreal thrones—
I pass them unalarmed. Not Chaos, not
The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
Nor aught of blinder vacancy, scooped out
By help of dreams—can breed such fear and awe
As fall upon us often when we look
Into our Minds, into the Mind of Man—
My haunt, and the main region of my song.
—Beauty—a living Presence of the earth,
Surpassing the most fair ideal Forms
Which craft of delicate Spirits hath compose
From earth's materials—waits upon my steps;
Pitches her tents before me as I move,
An hourly neighbor. Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields—like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main—why should they be
A history only of departed things,

Or a mere fiction of what never was
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.
—I, long before the blissful hour arrives,
Would chant, in lonely peace, the spousal verse
Of this great consummation:—and, by words
Which speak of nothing more than what we are,
Would I arouse the sensual from their sleep
Of Death, and win the vacant and the vain
To noble raptures; while my voice proclaims
How exquisitely the individual Mind
(And the progressive powers perhaps no less
Of the whole species) to the external World
Is fitted:—and how exquisitely, too—
Theme this but little heard of among men—
The external World is fitted to the Mind:
And the creation (by no lower name
Can it be called) which they with blended might
Accomplish:—this is our high argument.
Such grateful haunts foregoing, if I oft
Must turn elsewhere—to travel near the tribes
And fellowships of men, and see ill sights
Of maddening passions mutually inflamed;
Must hear Humanity in fields and groves
Pipe solitary anguish; or must hang
Brooding above the fierce confederate storm
Of sorrow, barricadoed evermore
Within the walls of cities—may these sounds
Have their authentic comment; that even these
Hearing, I be not downcast or forlorn!—
Descend, prophetic Spirit! that inspir'd
The human Soul of universal earth, !

* See Notes at end of the volume.

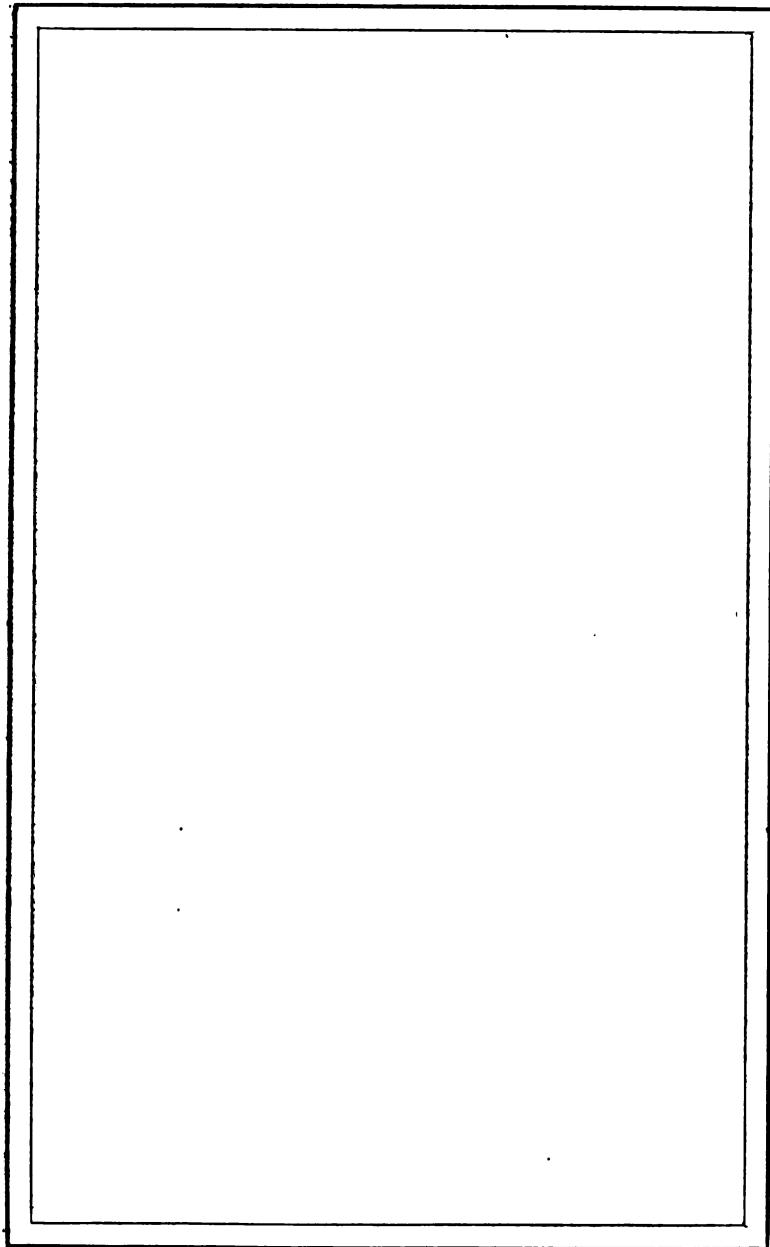
P R E F A C E.

Dreaming on things to come; and dost possess
A metropolitan temple in the hearts
Of mighty Poets: upon me bestow
A gift of genuine insight; that my Song
With star-like virtue in its place may shine,
Shedding benignant influence, and secure,
Itself, from all malevolent effect
Of those mutations that extend their sway
Throughout the nether sphere!—And if with this
I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the Mind and Man
Contemplating; and who, and what he was—
The transitory Being that beheld
This Vision; when and where, and how he lived;
Be not this labor useless. If such theme
May sort with highest objects, then—dread Power
Whose gracious favor is the primal source
Of all illumination—may my Life
Express the image of a better time,
More wise desires, and simpler manners;—nurse
My heart in genuine freedom:—all pure thoughts
Be with me;—so shall thy unfailing love
Guide, and support, and cheer me to the end!

THE EXCURSION.

BOOK FIRST.

THE WANDERER.



THE WANDERER

ARGUMENT.

A Summer Forenoon.—The Author reaches a ruined Cottage upon a Common, and there meets with a revered friend, the Wanderer, of whose education and course of life he gives an account.—The Wanderer, while resting under the shade of the trees that surround the Cottage, relates the History of its last Inhabitant.

'T WAS summer, and the sun had mounted high :
Southward the landscape indistinctly glared
Through a pale steam ; but all the northern downs,
In clearest air ascending, showed far off
A surface dappled o'er with shadows flung
From brooding clouds ; shadows that lay in spots
Determined and unmoved, with steady beams
Of bright and pleasant sunshine interposed ;
To him most pleasant who on soft cool moss
Extends his careless limbs along the front
Of some huge cave, whose rocky ceiling casts
A twilight of its own, an ample shade
Where the wren warbles, while the dreaming man,
Half conscious of the soothing melody,
With side-long eye looks out upon the scene,
By power of that impending covert, thrown,
To finer distance. Mine was at that hour

Far other lot, yet with good hope that soon
Under a shade as grateful I should find
Rest, and be welcomed there to livelier joy.
Across a bare wide Common I was toiling
With languid steps that by the slippery turf
Were baffled; nor could my weak arm disperse
The host of insects gathering round my face,
And ever with me as I paced along.

Upon that open moorland stood a grove,
The wished-for port to which my course was bound.
Thither I came, and there, amid the gloom
Spread by a brotherhood of lofty elms,
Appeared a roofless Hut; four naked walls
That stared upon each other!—I looked round,
And to my wish and to my hope espied
The Friend I sought; a man of reverend age,
But stout and hale, for travel unimpaired.
There was he seen upon the cottage-bench,
Recumbent in the shade, as if asleep;
An iron-pointed staff lay at his side.

Him had I marked the day before—alone
And stationed in the public way, with face
Turned toward the sun then setting, while that staff
Afforded, to the figure of the man
Detained for contemplation or repose,
Graceful support; his countenance as he stood
Was hidden from my view, and he remained
Unrecognized; but, stricken by the sight,
With slackened footsteps I advanced, and soon
A glad congratulation we exchanged
At such unthought-of meeting.—For the night
We parted, nothing willingly; and now

He by appointment waited for me here,
Under the covert of these clustering elms.

We were tried Friends : amid a pleasant vale,
In the antique market-village where was passed
My school-time, an apartment he had owned,
To which at intervals the Wanderer drew,
And found a kind of home or harbor there.
He loved me ; from a swarm of rosy boys
Singled out me, as he in sport would say,
For my grave looks, too thoughtful for my years.
As I grew up, it was my best delight
To be his chosen comrade. Many a time,
On holidays, we rambled through the woods :
We sate—we walked ; he pleased me with report
Of things which he had seen ; and often touched
Abstrusest matter, reasonings of the mind
Turned inward ; or at my request would sing
Old songs, the product of his native hills ;
A skilful distribution of sweet sounds,
Feeding the soul, and eagerly imbibed
As cool refreshing water, by the care
Of the industrious husbandman, diffused
Through a parched meadow-ground, in time of
drought.
Still deeper welcome found his pure discourse :
How precious when in riper days I learned
To weigh with care his words, and to rejoice
In the plain presence of his dignity !

Oh ! many are the Poets that are sown
By Nature ; men endowed with highest gifts,
The vision and the faculty divine ;

Yet wanting the accomplishment of verse,
(Which, in the docile season of their youth,
It was denied them to acquire, through lack
Of culture and the inspiring aid of books,
Or haply by a temper too severe,
Or a nice backwardness afraid of shame)
Nor having e'er, as life advanced, been led
By circumstance to take unto the height
The measure of themselves, these favored beings,
All but a scattered few, live out their time,
Husbanding that which they possess within,
And go to the grave unthought of. Strongest minds
Are often those of whom the noisy world
Hears least; else surely this Man had not left
His graces unrevealed and unproclaimed.
But, as the mind was filled with inward light,
So not without distinction had he lived,
Beloved and honored—far as he was known.
And some small portion of his eloquent speech,
And something that may serve to set in view
The feeling pleasures of his loneliness,
His observations, and the thoughts his mind
Had dealt with—I will here record in verse;
Which, if with truth it correspond, and sink
Or rise as venerable Nature leads,
The high and tender Muses shall accept
With gracious smile, deliberately pleased,
And listening Time reward with sacred praise.

Among the hills of Athol he was born;
Where, on a small hereditary farm,
An unproductive slip of rugged ground,
His Parents, with their numerous offspring, dwelt;

A virtuous household, though exceeding poor !
Pure livers were they all, austere and grave,
And fearing God ; the very children taught
Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
And an habitual piety, maintained
With strictness scarcely known on English ground.

From his sixth year, the Boy of whom I speak,
In summer, tended cattle on the hills ;
But, through the inclement and the perilous day
Of long-continuing winter, he repaired,
Equipped with satchel, to a school, that stood
Sole building on a mountain's dreary edge,
Remote from view of city spire, or sound
Of minster clock ! From that bleak tenement
He, many an evening, to his distant home
In solitude returning, saw the hills
Grow larger in the darkness ; all alone
Beheld the stars come out above his head,
And travelled through the wood, with no one near
To whom he might confess the things he saw.

So the foundations of his mind were laid.
In such communion, not from terror free,
While yet a child, and long before his time,
Had he perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness ; and deep feelings had impressed
So vividly great objects, that they lay
Upon his mind like substances, whose presence
Perplexed the bodily sense. He had received
A precious gift ; for, as he grew in years,
With these impressions would he still compare
All his remembrances, thoughts, shapes, and forms ;

And, being still unsatisfied with aught
Of dimmer character, he thence attained
An active power to fasten images
Upon his brain; and on their pictured lines
Intensely brooded, even till they acquired
The liveliness of dreams. Nor did he fail,
While yet a child, with a child's eagerness
Incessantly to turn his ear and eye
On all things which the moving seasons brought
To feed such appetite—nor this alone
Appeased his yearning :—in the after-day
Of boyhood, many an hour in caves forlorn,
And 'mid the hollow depths of naked crags
He sate, and even in their fixed lineaments,
Or from the power of a peculiar eye,
Or by creative feeling overborne,
Or by predominance of thought oppressed,
Even in their fixed and steady lineaments
He traced an ebbing and a flowing mind,
Expression ever varying !

Thus informed,
He had small need of books ; for many a tale
Traditionary, round the mountains hung,
And many a legend, peopling the dark woods,
Nourished Imagination in her growth,
And gave the Mind that apprehensive power
By which she is made quick to recognize
The moral properties and scope of things.
But eagerly he read, and read again,
Whate'er the minister's old shelf supplied ;
The life and death of martyrs, who sustained,
With will inflexible, those fearful pangs
Triumphantly displayed in records left

Of persecution, and the Covenant—times
Whose echo rings through Scotland to this hour !
And there, by lucky hap, had been preserved
A straggling volume, torn and incomplete,
That left half-told the preternatural tale,
Romance of giants, chronicle of fiends,
Profuse in garniture of wooden cuts
Strange and uncouth ; dire faces, figures dire,
Sharp-kneed, sharp-elbowed, and lean-ankled too,
With long and ghostly shanks—forms which once seen
Could never be forgotten !

In his heart,
Where Fear sate thus, a cherished visitant,
Was wanting yet the pure delight of love
By sound diffused, or by the breathing air,
Or by the silent looks of happy things,
Or flowing from the universal face
Of earth and sky. But he had felt the power
Of Nature, and already was prepared,
By his intense conceptions, to receive
Deeply the lesson deep of love which he,
Whom Nature, by whatever means, has taught
To feel intensely, cannot but receive.

Such was the Boy—but for the growing Youth
What soul was his, when, from the naked top
Of some bold headland, he beheld the sun
Rise up, and bathe the world in light ! He looked--
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid mass, in gladness lay
Beneath him :—Far and wide the clouds were
touched,
And in their silent faces could he read

Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy; his spirit drank
The spectacle: sensation, soul, and form,
All melted into him; they swallowed up
His animal being; in them did he live,
And by them did he live; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God,
Thought was not; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him; it was blessedness and love!

A Herdsman on the lonely mountain tops,
Such intercourse was his, and in this sort
Was his existence oftentimes *possessed*.
O then how beautiful, how bright, appeared
The written promise! Early had he learned
To reverence the volume that displays
The mystery, the life which cannot die;
But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
All things, responsive to the writing, there
Breathed immortality, revolving life,
And greatness still revolving; infinite:
There littleness was not; the least of things
Seemed infinite; and there his spirit shaped
Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*.
What wonder if his being thus became
• Sublime and comprehensive! Low desires,
Low thoughts had there no place: yet was his heart
Lowly; for he was meek in gratitude,

Oft as he called those ecstasies to mind,
And whence they flowed; and from them he acquired
Wisdom, which works through patience; thence he learned
In oft-recurring hours of sober thought
To look on Nature with a humble heart,
Self-questioned where it did not understand,
And with a superstitious eye of love.

So passed the time; yet to the nearest town
He duly went with what small overplus
His earnings might supply, and brought away
The book that most had tempted his desires
While at the stall he read. Among the hills
He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
The divine Milton. Lore of different kind,
The annual savings of a toilsome life,
His School-master supplied; books that explain
The purer elements of truth involved
In lines and numbers, and, by charm severe,
(Especially perceived where nature droops
And feeling is suppressed) preserve the mind
Busy in solitude and poverty.
These occupations oftentimes deceived
The listless hours, while in the hollow vale,
Hollow and green, he lay on the green turf
In pensive idleness. What could he do,
Thus daily thirsting, in that lonesome life,
With blind endeavors? Yet, still uppermost,
Nature was at his heart as if he felt,
Though yet he knew not how, a wasting power
In all things that from her sweet influence

Might tend to wean him. Therefore with her hues,
Her forms, and with the spirit of her forms,
He clothed the nakedness of austere truth.
While yet he lingered in the rudiments
Of science, and among her simplest laws,
His triangles—they were the stars of heaven,
The silent stars! Oft did he take delight
To measure the altitude of some tall crag
That is the eagle's birth-place, or some peak
Familiar with forgotten years, that shows
Inscribed upon its visionary sides,
The history of many a winter storm,
Or obscure records of the path of fire.

And thus before his eighteenth year was told,
Accumulated feelings pressed his heart
With still increasing weight; he was o'erpowered
By Nature; by the turbulence subdued
Of his own mind; by mystery and hope,
And the first virgin passion of a soul
Communing with the glorious universe.
Full often wished he that the winds might rage
When they were silent: far more fondly now
Than in his earlier season did he love
Tempestuous nights—the conflict and the sounds
That live in darkness. From his intellect
And from the stillness of abstracted thought
He asked repose; and, failing oft to win
The peace required, he scanned the laws of light
Amid the roar of torrents, where they send
From hollow clefts up to the clearer air
A cloud of mist, that smitten by the sun
Varies its rainbow hues. But vainly thus,

And vainly by all other means, he strove
To mitigate the fever of his heart.

In dreams, in study, and in ardent thought,
Thus was he reared ; much wanting to assist
The growth of intellect, yet gaining more,
And every moral feeling of his soul
Strengthened and braced, by breathing in content
The keen, the wholesome air of poverty,
And drinking from the well of homely life.
—But, from past liberty, and tried restraints,
He now was summoned to select the course
Of humble industry that promised best
To yield him no unworthy maintenance.
Urged by his Mother, he essayed to teach
A village-school—but wandering thoughts were then
A misery to him ; and the Youth resigned
A task he was unable to perform.

That stern yet kindly Spirit, who constrains
The Savoyard to quit his naked rocks,
The free-born Swiss to leave his narrow vales,
(Spirit attached to regions mountainous
Like their own stedfast clouds) did now impel
His restless mind to look abroad with hope.
—An irksome drudgery seems it to plod on,
Through hot and dusty ways, or pelting storm,
A vagrant Merchant under a heavy load
Bent as he moves, and needing frequent rest ;
Yet do such travellers find their own delight ;
And their hard service, deemed debasing now,
Gained merited respect in simpler times ;

When squire, and priest, and they who round them
dwelt
In rustic sequestration—all dependent
Upon the PEDLAR's toil—supplied their wants,
Or pleased their fancies with the wares he brought.
Not ignorant was the Youth that still no few
Of his adventurous countrymen were led
By perseverance in this track of life
To competence and ease :—to him it offered
Attractions manifold ;—and this he chose.
—His Parents on the enterprise bestowed
Their farewell benediction, but with hearts
Foreboding evil. From his native hills
He wandered far ; much did he see of men,
Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
Their passions and their feelings ; chiefly those
Essential and eternal in the heart,
That, 'mid the simpler forms of rural life,
Exist more simple in their elements,
And speak a plainer language.* In the woods,
A lone enthusiast, and among the fields,
Itinerant in this labour, he had passed
The better portion of his time ; and there
Spontaneously had his affections thriven
Amid the bounties of the year, the peace
And liberty of nature ; there he kept
In solitude and solitary thought
His mind in a just equipoise of love.
Serene it was, unclouded by the cares
Of ordinary life ; unvexed, unwarped
By partial bondage. In his steady course,
No piteous revolutions had he felt,
No wild varieties of joy and grief.

Unoccupied by sorrow of its own,
His heart lay open; and, by nature tuned
And constant disposition of his thoughts
To sympathy with man, he was alive
To all that was enjoyed where'er he went,
And all that was endured; for, in himself
Happy, and quiet in his cheerfulness,
He had no painful pressure from without
That made him turn aside from wretchedness
With coward fears. He could *afford* to suffer
With those whom he saw suffer. Hence it came
That in our best experience he was rich,
And in the wisdom of our daily life.
For hence, minutely, in his various rounds,
He had observed the progress and decay
Of many minds, of minds and bodies too;
The history of many families;
How they had prospered; how they were o'erthrown
By passion or mischance, or such misrule
Among the unthinking masters of the earth
As makes the nations groan.

This active course
He followed till provision for his wants
Had been obtained; the Wanderer then resolved
To pass the remnant of his days, untasked
With needless services, from hardship free.
His calling laid aside, he lived at ease;
But still he loved to pace the public roads
And the wild paths; and, by the summer's warmth
Invited, often would he leave his home
And journey far, revisiting the scenes
That to his memory were most endeared.
—Vigorous in health, of hopeful spirits, undamped

By worldly-mindedness or anxious care ;
Observant, studious, thoughtful and refreshed
By knowledge gathered up from day to day ;
Thus had he lived a long and innocent life.

The Scottish Church, both on himself and those
With whom from childhood he grew up, had held
The strong hand of her purity ; and still
Had watched him with an unrelenting eye.
This he remembered in his riper age
With gratitude, and reverential thoughts.
But by the native vigor of his mind,
By his habitual wanderings out of doors,
By loneliness, and goodness, and kind works,
Whate'er, in docile childhood or in youth,
He had imbibed of fear or darker thought
Was melted all away ; so true was this,
That sometimes his religion seemed to me
Self-taught, as of a dreamer in the woods ;
Who to the model of his own pure heart
Shaped his belief, as grace divine inspired,
And human reason dictated with awe.
—And surely never did there live on earth
A man of kindlier nature. The rough sports
And teasing ways of children vexed not him ;
Indulgent listener was he to the tongue
Of garrulous age ; nor did the sick man's tale,
To his fraternal sympathy addressed,
Obtain reluctant hearing.

Plain his garb ;
Such as might suit a rustic Sire, prepared
For sabbath duties ; yet he was a man
Whom no one could have passed without remark.

Active and nervous was his gait ; his limbs
And his whole figure breathed intelligence.
Time had compressed the freshness of his cheek
Into a narrower circle of deep red,
But had not tamed his eye ; that, under brows
Shaggy and grey, had meanings which it brought
From years of youth ; which, like a Being made
Of many Beings, he had wondrous skill
To blend with knowledge of the years to come,
Human, or such as lie beyond the grave.

So was He framed ; and such his course of life
Who now, with no appendage but a staff,
The prized memorial of relinquished toils,
Upon that cottage-bench reposed his limbs,
Screened from the sun. Supine the Wanderer lay,
His eyes as if in drowsiness half shut,
The shadows of the breezy elms above
Dappling his face. He had not heard the sound
Of my approaching steps, and in the shade
Unnoticed did I stand some minutes' space.
At length I hailed him, seeing that his hat
Was moist with water-drops, as if the brim
Had newly scooped a running stream. He rose
And ere our lively greeting into peace
Had settled, " 'Tis," said I, " a burning day :
My lips are parched with thirst, but you, it seems,
Have somewhere found relief." He, at the word,
Pointing towards a sweet-briar, bade me climb
The fence where that aspiring shrub looked out
Upon the public way. It was a plot
Of garden ground run wild, its matted weeds

Marked with the steps of those, whom, as they passed,
The gooseberry trees that shot in long lank slips,
Or currants, hanging from their leafless stems,
In scanty strings, had tempted to o'erleap
The broken wall. I looked around, and there,
Where two tall hedge-rows of thick alder boughs
Joined in a cold damp nook, espied a well
Shrouded with willow-flowers and plumy fern.
My thirst I slaked, and, from the cheerless spot
Withdrawing, straightway to the shade returned
Where sate the old Man on the cottage-bench ;
And, while, beside him, with uncovered head,
I yet was standing, freely to respire,
And cool my temples in the fanning air,
Thus did he speak. " I see around me here
Things which you cannot see : we die, my Friend,
Nor we alone, but that which each man loved
And prized in his peculiar nook of earth
Dies with him, or is changed ; and very soon
Even of the good is no memorial left.
—The Poets, in their elegies and songs
Lamenting the departed, call the groves,
They call upon the hills and streams to mourn,
And senseless rocks ; nor idly ; for they speak,
In these their invocations, with a voice
Obedient to the strong creative power
Of human passion. Sympathies there are
More tranquil, yet perhaps of kindred birth,
That steal upon the meditative mind,
And grow with thought. Beside yon spring I stood,
And eyed its waters till we seemed to feel
One sadness, they and I. For them a bond

Of brotherhood is broken : time has been
When, every day, the touch of human hand
Dislodged the natural sleep that binds them up
In mortal stillness ; and they ministered
To human comfort. Stooping down to drink,
Upon the slimy foot-stone I espied
The useless fragment of a wooden bowl,
Green with the moss of years, and subject only
To the soft handling of the elements :
There let it lie—how foolish are such thoughts !
Forgive them ;—never—never did my steps
Approach this door but she who dwelt within
A daughter's welcome gave me, and I loved her
As my own child. Oh, Sir ! the good die first,
And they whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket. Many a passenger
Hath blessed poor Margaret for her gentle looks,
When she upheld the cool refreshment drawn
From that forsaken spring ; and no one came
But he was welcome ; no one went away
—But that it seemed she loved him. She is dead,
The light extinguished of her lonely hut,
The hut itself abandoned to decay,
And she forgotten in the quiet grave.

I speak," continued he, "of one whose stock
Of virtues bloomed beneath this lowly roof.
She was a Woman of a steady mind,
Tender and deep in her excess of love;
Not speaking much, pleased rather with the joy
Of her own thoughts : by some especial care
Her temper had been framed, as if to make
A Being, who by adding love to peace

Might live on earth a life of happiness.
Her wedded Partner lacked not on his side
The humble worth that satisfied her heart :
Frugal, affectionate, sober, and withal
Keenly industrious. She with pride would tell
That he was often seated at his loom,
In summer, ere the mower was abroad
Among the dewy grass—in early spring,
Ere the last star had vanished.—They who passed
At evening, from behind the garden fence
Might hear his busy spade, which he would ply,
After his daily work, until the light
Had failed, and every leaf and flower were lost
In the dark hedges. So their days were spent
In peace and comfort ; and a pretty boy
Was their best hope, next to the God in heaven.

Not twenty years ago, but you I think
Can scarcely bear it now in mind, there came
Two blighting seasons, when the fields were left
With half a harvest. It pleased Heaven to add
A worse affliction in the plague of war :
This happy Land was stricken to the heart !
A Wanderer then among the cottages,
I, with my freight of winter raiment, saw
The hardships of that season : many rich
Sank down, as in a dream, among the poor ;
And of the poor did many cease to be,
And their place knew them not. Meanwhile, abridged
Of daily comforts, gladly reconciled
To numerous self-denials, Margaret
Went struggling on through those calamitous years
With cheerful hope, until the second autumn,

When her life's Helpmate on a sick-bed lay,
Smitten with perilous fever. In disease
He lingered long ; and, when his strength returned,
He found the little he had stored, to meet
The hour of accident or crippling age,
Was all consumed. A second infant now
Was added to the troubles of a time
Laden, for them and all of their degree,
With care and sorrow : shoals of artizans,
From ill-requited labor turned adrift,
Sought daily bread from public charity,
They, and their wives and children—happier far
Could they have lived as do the little birds
That peck along the hedge-rows, or the kite
That makes her dwelling on the mountain rocks !

A sad reverse it was for him who long
Had filled with plenty, and possessed in peace,
This lonely Cottage. At the door he stood,
And whistled many a snatch of merry tunes
That had no mirth in them ; or with his knife
Carved uncouth figures on the heads of sticks—
Then, not less idly, sought, through every nook
In house or garden, any casual work
Of use or ornament ; and with a strange,
Amusing, yet uneasy novelty,
He mingled, where he might, the various tasks
Of summer, autumn, winter, and of spring.
But this endured not ; his good humor soon
Became a weight in which no pleasure was :
And poverty brought on a petted mood
And a sore temper : day by day he drooped,
And he would leave his work—and to the town

Would turn without an errand his slack steps ;
Or wander here and there among the fields.
One while he would speak lightly of his babes,
And with a cruel tongue : at other times
He tossed them with a false unnatural joy :
And 'twas a rueful thing to see the looks
Of the poor innocent children. 'Every smile,'
Said Margaret to me, here beneath these trees,
'Made my heart bleed.'

At this the Wanderer paused ;
And, looking up to those enormous elms,
He said, "Tis now the hour of deepest noon.
At this still season of repose and peace,
This hour when all things which are not at rest
Are cheerful ; while this multitude of flies
With tuneful hum is filling all the air ;
Why should a tear be on an old Man's cheek ?
Why should we thus, with an untoward mind,
And in the weakness of humanity,
From natural wisdom turn our hearts away ;
To natural comfort shut our eyes and ears ;
And, feeding on disquiet, thus disturb
The calm of nature with our restless thoughts !

He spake with somewhat of a solemn tone :
But, when he ended, there was in his face
Such easy cheerfulness, a look so mild,
That for a little time it stole away
All recollection ; and that simple tale
Passed from my mind like a forgotten sound.
A while on trivial things we held discourse,
To me soon tasteless. In my own despite,

I thought of that poor Woman as of one
Whom I had known and loved. He had rehearsed
Her homely tale with such familiar power,
With such an active countenance, an eye
So busy, that the things of which he spake
Seemed present; and, attention now relaxed,
A heartfelt chillness crept along my veins.
I rose; and, having left the breezy shade,
Stood drinking comfort from the warmer sun,
That had not cheered me long—ere, looking round
Upon that tranquil Ruin, I returned,
And begged of the old Man that, for my sake,
He would resume his story.

He replied,
“ It were a wantonness, and would demand
Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
Even of the dead; contented thence to draw
A momentary pleasure, never marked
By reason, barren of all future good.
But we have known that there is often found
In mournful thoughts, and always might be found,
A power to virtue friendly; were ’t not so,
I am a dreamer among men, indeed
An idle dreamer! ’T is a common tale,
An ordinary sorrow of man’s life,
A tale of silent suffering, hardly clothed
In bodily form.—But without further bidding
I will proceed.

While thus it fared with them,
To whom this cottage, till those hapless years,
Had been a blessed home, it was my chance

To travel in a country far remote;
And when these lofty elms once more appeared
What pleasant expectations lured me on
O'er the flat Common!—With quick step I reached
The threshold, lifted with light hand the latch;
But, when I entered, Margaret looked at me
A little while; then turned her head away
Speechless,—and, sitting down upon a chair,
Wept bitterly. I wist not what to do,
Nor how to speak to her. Poor Wretch! at last
She rose from off her seat, and then,—O Sir!
I cannot *tell* how she pronounced my name:—
With fervent love, and with a face of grief
Unutterably helpless, and a look
That seemed to cling upon me, she inquired
If I had seen her husband. As she spake
A strange surprise and fear came to my heart,
Nor had I power to answer ere she told
That he had disappeared—not two months gone.
He left his house: two wretched days had past,
And on the third, as wistfully she raised
Her head from off her pillow, to look forth,
Like one in trouble, for returning light,
Within her chamber-casement she espied
A folded paper, lying as if placed
To meet her waking eyes. This tremblingly
She opened—found no writing, but beheld
Pieces of money carefully enclosed,
Silver and gold. ‘I shuddered at the sight,’
Said Margaret, ‘for I knew it was his hand
That must have placed it there; and ere that day
Was ended, that long anxious day, I learned,
From one who by my husband had been sent

With the sad news, that he had joined a troop
Of soldiers, going to a distant land.

—He left me thus—he could not gather heart
To take a farewell of me; for he feared
That I should follow with my babes, and sink
Beneath the misery of that wandering life.'

This tale did Margaret tell with many tears:
And, when she ended, I had little power
To give her comfort, and was glad to take
Such words of hope from her own mouth as served
To cheer us both. But long we had not talked
Ere we built up a pile of better thoughts,
And with a brighter eye she looked around
As if she had been shedding tears of joy.
We parted.—'Twas the time of early spring;
I left her busy with her garden tools;
And well remember, o'er that fence she looked,
And, while I paced along the foot-way path,
Called out, and sent a blessing after me,
With tender cheerfulness, and with a voice
That seemed the very sound of happy thoughts.

I roved o'er many a hill and many a dale,
With my accustomed load; in heat and cold,
Through many a wood and many an open ground,
In sunshine and in shade, in wet and fair,
Drooping or blithe of heart, as might beset;
My best companions now the driving winds,
And now the 'trotting brooks' and whispering trees,
And now the music of my own sad steps,
With many a short-lived thought that passed between,
And disappeared.

I journeyed back this way,
When, in the warmth of midsummer, the wheat
Was yellow; and the soft and bladed grass,
Springing afresh, had o'er the hay-field spread
Its tender verdure. At the door arrived,
I found that she was absent. In the shade,
Where now we sit, I waited her return.
Her cottage, then a cheerful object, wore
Its customary look,—only, it seemed,
The honeysuckle, crowding round the porch,
Hung down in heavier tufts; and that bright weed,
The yellow stone-crop, suffered to take root
Along the window's edge, profusely grew
Blinding the lower panes. I turned aside,
And strolled into her garden. It appeared
To lag behind the season, and had lost
Its pride of neatness. Daisy-flowers and thrift
Had broken their trim border-lines, and straggled
O'er paths they used to deck: carnations, once
Prized for surpassing beauty, and no less
For the peculiar pains they had required,
Declined their languid heads, wanting support.
The cumbrous bind-weed, with its wreaths and bells,
Had twined about her two small rows of peas,
And dragged them to the earth.

Ere this an hour
Was wasted.—Back I turned my restless steps;
A stranger passed; and, guessing whom I sought,
He said that she was used to ramble far.—
The sun was sinking in the west; and now
I sat with sad impatience. From within
Her solitary infant cried aloud;
Then, like a blast that dies away self-stilled,

The voice was silent. From the bench I rose ;
But neither could divert nor soothe my thoughts.
The spot, though fair, was very desolate—
The longer I remained, more desolate :
And, looking round me, now I first observed
The corner stones, on either side the porch,
With dull red stains discolored, and stuck o'er
With tufts and hairs of wool, as if the sheep,
That fed upon the Common, thither came
Familiarly, and found a couching-place
Even at her threshold. Deeper shadows fell
From these tall elms ; the cottage clock struck
eight ;—
I turned, and saw her distant a few steps.
Her face was pale and thin—her figure, too,
Was changed. As she unlocked the door, she said,
' It grieves me you have waited here so long,
But, in good truth, I 've wandered much of late ;
And, sometimes—to my shame I speak—have need
Of my best prayers to bring me back again.'
While on the board she spread our evening meal,
She told me—interrupting not the work
Which gave employment to her listless hands—
That she had parted with her elder child ;
To a kind master on a distant farm
Now happily apprenticed.—' I perceive
You look at me, and you have cause ; to-day
I have been travelling far ; and many days
About the fields I wander, knowing this
Only, that what I seek I cannot find ;
And so I waste my time : for I am changed ;
And to myself,' said she, ' have done much wrong
And to this helpless infant. I have slept

Weeping, and weeping have I waked ; my tears
Have flowed, as if my body were not such
As others are ; and I could never die.
But I am now in mind and in my heart
More easy ; and I hope,' said she, ' that God
Will give me patience to endure the things
Which I behold at home.'

It would have grieved
Your very soul to see her. Sir, I feel
The story linger in my heart ; I fear
'T is long and tedious ; but my spirit clings
To that poor Woman :—so familiarly
Do I perceive her manner, and her look,
And presence ; and so deeply do I feel
Her goodness, that, not seldom, in my walks
A momentary trance comes over me ;
And to myself I seem to muse on one !
By sorrow laid asleep ; or borne away,
A human being destined to awake
To human life, or something very near
To human life, when he shall come again
For whom she suffered. Yes, it would have grieved
Your very soul to see her : evermore
Her eyelids drooped, her eyes downward were cast ;
And, when she at her table gave me food,
She did not look at me. Her voice was low,
Her body was subdued. In every act,
Pertaining to her house affairs, appeared
The careless stillness of a thinking mind
Self-occupied ; to which all outward things
Are like an idle matter. Still she sighed,
But yet no motion of the breast was seen,
No heaving of the heart. While by the fire

We sate together, sighs came on my ear,
I knew not how, and hardly whence they came.

Ere my departure, to her care I gave,
For her son's use, some tokens of regard,
Which with a look of welcome she received ;
And I exhorted her to place her trust
In God's good love, and seek his help by prayer.
I took my staff, and, when I kissed her babe,
The tears stood in her eyes. I left her then
With the best hope and comfort I could give :
She thanked me for my wish ;—but for my hope
It seemed she did not thank me.

I returned,
And took my rounds along this road again
When on its sunny bank the primrose flower
Peeped forth, to give an earnest of the Spring.
I found her sad and drooping : she had learned
No tidings of her husband ; if he lived,
She knew not that he lived ; if he were dead,
She knew not he was dead. She seemed the same
In person and appearance ; but her house
Bespeak a sleepy hand of negligence ;
The floor was neither dry nor neat, the hearth
Was comfortless, and her small lot of books,
Which, in the cottage-window, heretofore
Had been piled up against the corner panes
In seemly order, now, with straggling leaves
Lay scattered here and there, open or shut,
As they had chanced to fall. Her infant Babe
Had from its Mother caught the trick of grief,
And sighed among its playthings. I withdrew,
And once again entering the garden saw,

More plainly still, that poverty and grief
Were now come nearer to her : weeds defaced
The hardened soil, and knots of withered grass :
No ridges there appeared of clear black mold,
No winter greenness ; of her herbs and flowers,
It seemed the better part were gnawed away
Or trampled into earth ; a chain of straw,
Which had been twined about the slender stem
Of a young apple-tree, lay at its root ;
The bark was nibbled round by truant sheep.
—Margaret stood near, her infant in her arms,
And, noting that my eye was on the tree,
She said, 'I fear it will be dead and gone
Ere Robert come again.' When to the House
We had returned together, she enquired
If I had any hope :—but for her babe
And for her little orphan boy, she said,
She had no wish to live, that she must die
Of sorrow. Yet I saw the idle loom
Still in its place ; his sundry garments hung
Upon the self-same nail ; his very staff
Stood undisturbed behind the door.

And when,
In bleak December, I retraced this way,
She told me that her little babe was dead,
And she was left alone. She now, released
From her maternal cares, had taken up
The employment common through these wilds, and
gained,
By spinning hemp, a pittance for herself ;
And for this end had hired a neighbor's boy
To give her needful help. That very time
Most willingly she put her work aside,

And walked with me along the miry road,
Heedless how far ; and, in such piteous sort
That any heart had ached to hear her, begged
That, wheresoe'er I went, I still would ask
For him whom she had lost. We parted then—
Our final parting ; for from that time forth
Did many seasons pass ere I returned
Into this tract again.

Nine tedious years ;
From their first separation, nine long years,
She lingered in unquiet widowhood ;
A Wife and Widow. Needs must it have been
A sore heart-wasting ! I have heard, my Friend,
That in yon arbor oftentimes she sate
Alone, through half the vacant sabbath day :
And, if a dog passed by, she still would quit
The shade, and look abroad. On this old bench
For hours she sate ; and evermore her eye
Was busy in the distance, shaping things
That made her heart beat quick. You see that path,
Now faint,—the grass has crept o'er its grey line ;
There, to and fro, she paced through many a day
Of the warm summer, from a belt of hemp
That girt her waist, spinning the long-drawn thread
With backward steps. Yet ever as there passed
A man whose garments showed the soldier's red,
Or crippled mendicant in sailor's garb,
The little child who sate to turn the wheel
Ceased from his task ; and she with faltering voice
Made many a fond enquiry ; and when they,
Whose presence gave no comfort, were gone by,
Her heart was still more sad. And by yon gate,
That bars the traveller's road, she often stood,

And when a stranger horseman came, the latch
Would lift, and in his face look wistfully :
Most happy, if, from aught discovered there
Of tender feeling, she might dare repeat
The same sad question. Meanwhile her poor Hut
Sank to decay ; for he was gone, whose hand,
At the first nipping of October frost,
Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw
Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
Through the long winter, reckless and alone ;
Until her house, by frost, and thaw, and rain,
Was sapped ; and while she slept, the nightly damps
Did chill her breast ; and in the stormy day
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind,
Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
Have parted hence : and still that length of road,
And this rude bench, one torturing hope endeared,
Fast-rooted at her heart ; and here, my Friend,—
In sickness she remained ; and here she died ;
Last human tenant of these ruined walls !”

The old Man ceased : he saw that I was moved ;
From that low bench, rising instinctively
I turned aside in weakness, nor had power
To thank him for the tale which he had told.
I stood, and leaning o'er the garden wall
Reviewed that Woman's sufferings ; and it seemed
To comfort me while with a brother's love
I blessed her in the impotence of grief.
Then towards the cottage I returned ; and traced
Fondly, though with an interest more mild,
That secret spirit of humanity

Which, 'mid the calm oblivious tendencies
Of nature, 'mid her plants, and weeds, and flowers,
And silent overgrowings, still survived.
The old Man, noting this, resumed, and said,
"My Friend! enough to sorrow you have given,
The purposes of wisdom ask no more :
Nor more would she have craved as due to one
Who, in her worst distress, had oftentimes felt
The unbounded might of prayer ; and learned, with
soul
Fixed on the Cross, that consolation springs
From sources deeper far than deepest pain,
For the meek Sufferer. Why then should we read
The forms of things with an unworthy eye ?
She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.
I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
By mist and silent rain-drops silvered o'er,
As once I passed, into my heart conveyed
So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
That passing shows of Being leave behind,
Appeared an idle dream, that could maintain,
Nowhere, dominion o'er the enlightened spirit
Whose meditative sympathies repose
Upon the breast of Faith. I turned away,
And walked along my road in happiness."

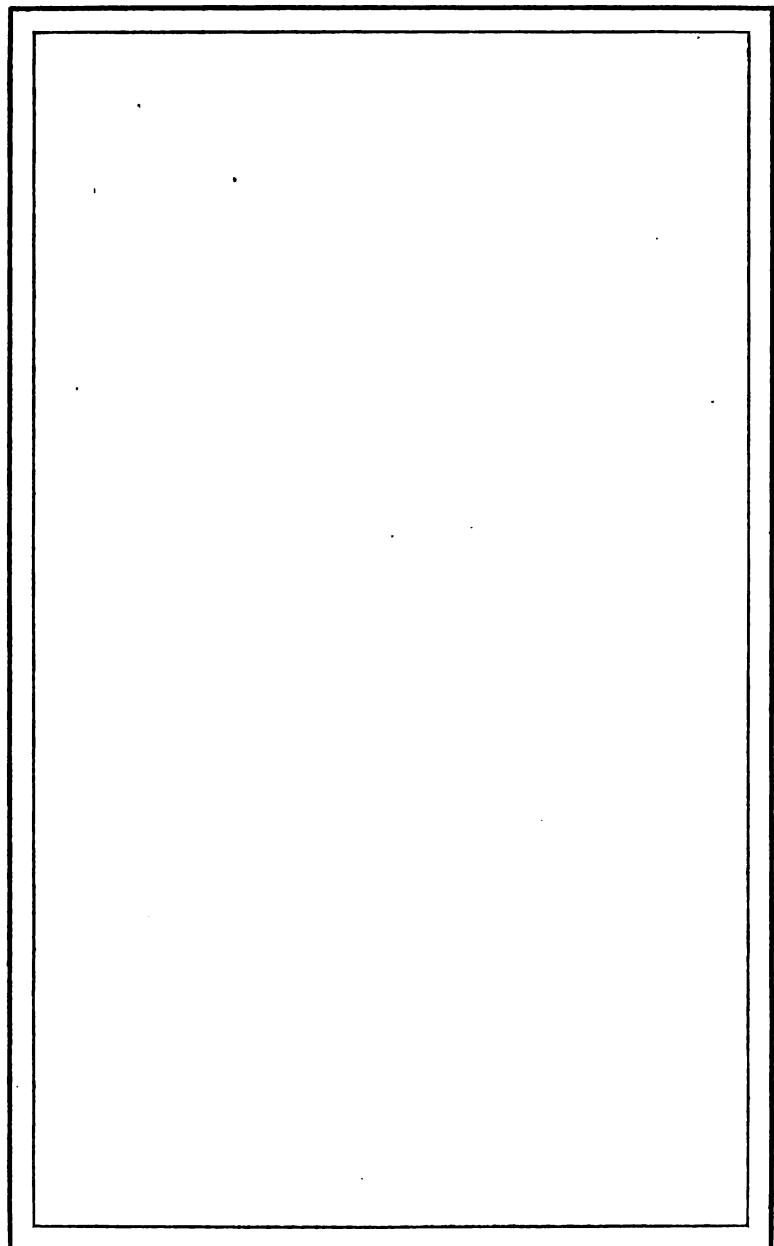
He ceased. Ere long the sun declining shot
A slant and mellow radiance, which began

To fall upon us, while, beneath the trees,
We sate on that low bench : and now we felt,
Admonished thus, the sweet hour coming on.
A linnet warbled from those lofty elms,
A thrush sang loud, and other melodies,
At distance heard, peopled the milder air.
The old Man rose, and, with a sprightly mien
Of hopeful preparation, grasped his staff ;
Together casting then a farewell look
Upon those silent walls, we left the shade ;
And, ere the stars were visible, had reached
A village-inn,—our evening resting-place.

THE EXCURSION.

BOOK SECOND.

THE SOLITARY.



THE SOLITARY.

ARGUMENT.

The Author describes his travels with the Wanderer, whose character is further illustrated—Morning scene, and view of a Village Wake—Wanderer's account of a Friend whom he purposed to visit—View, from an eminence, of the Valley which his Friend had chosen for his retreat—Sound of singing from below—a funeral procession—Descent into the Valley—Observations drawn from the Wanderer at sight of a book accidentally discovered in a recess in the Valley—Meeting with the Wanderer's friend, the Solitary—Wanderer's description of the mode of burial in this mountainous district—Solitary contrasts with this, that of the individual carried a few minutes before from the cottage—The cottage entered—Description of the Solitary's apartment—Repeat there—View, from the window, of two mountain summits; and the Solitary's description of the companionship they afford him—Account of the departed inmate of the cottage—Description of a grand spectacle upon the mountains, with its effect upon the Solitary's mind—Leave the house.

IN days of yore how fortunately fared
The Minstrel! wandering on from hall to hall,
Baronial court or royal; cheered with gifts
Munificent, and love, and ladies' praise;
Now meeting on his road an armed knight,
Now resting with a pilgrim by the side
Of a clear brook: beneath an abbey's roof
One evening sumptuously lodged; the next,
Humbly in a religious hospital;

Or with some merry outlaws of the wood;
Or haply shrouded in a hermit's cell.
Him, sleeping or awake, the robber spared;
He walked—protected from the sword of war
By virtue of that sacred instrument
His harp, suspended at the traveller's side;
His dear companion wheresoe'er he went
Opening from land to land an easy way
By melody, and by the charm of verse.
Yet not the noblest of that honored Race
Drew happier, loftier, more impassioned, thoughts
From his long journeyings and eventful life,
Than this obscure Itinerant had skill
To gather, ranging through the tamer ground
Of these our unimaginative days;
Both while he trod the earth in humblest guise
Accoutred with his burthen and his staff;
And now, when free to move with lighter pace.

What wonder, then, if I, whose favorite school
Hath been the fields, the roads, and rural lanes,
Looked on this guide with reverential love?
Each with the other pleased, we now pursued
Our journey, under favorable skies.
Turn wheresoe'er we would, he was a light
Unfailing: not a hamlet could we pass,
Rarely a house, that did not yield to him
Remembrances; or from his tongue call forth
Some way-beguiling tale. Nor less regard
Accompanied those strains of apt discourse,
Which nature's various objects might inspire;
And in the silence of his face I read
His overflowing spirit. Birds and beasts,

And the mute fish that glances in the stream,
And harmless reptile coiling in the sun,
And gorgeous insect hovering in the air,
The fowl domestic, and the household dog—
In his capacious mind, he loved them all :
Their rights acknowledging he felt for all.
Oft was occasion given me to perceive
How the calm pleasures of the pasturing herd
To happy contemplation soothed his walk ;
How the poor brute's condition, forced to run
Its course of suffering in the public road,
Sad contrast ! all too often smote his heart
With unavailing pity. Rich in love
And sweet humanity, he was, himself,
To the degree that he desired, beloved.
Smiles of good-will from faces that he knew
Greeted us all day long ; we took our seats
By many a cottage-hearth, where he received
The welcome of an inmate from afar,
And I at once forgot I was a Stranger.
—Nor was he loth to enter ragged huts,
Huts where his charity was blest ; his voice
Heard as the voice of an experienced friend.
And, sometimes—where the poor man held dispute
With his own mind, unable to subdue
Impatience through inaptness to perceive
General distress in his particular lot ;
Or cherishing resentment, or in vain
Struggling against it ; with a soul perplexed,
And finding in herself no steady power
To draw the line of comfort that divides
Calamity, the chastisement of Heaven,
From the injustice of our brother men—

To him appeal was made as to a judge ;
Who, with an understanding heart allayed
The perturbation ; listened to the plea ;
Resolved the dubious point ; and sentence gave
So grounded, so applied, that it was heard
With softened spirit, even when it condemned.

Such intercourse I witnessed, while we roved,
Now as his choice directed, now as mine ;
Or both, with equal readiness of will,
Our course submitting to the changeful breeze
Of accident. But when the rising sun
Had three times called us to renew our walk,
My Fellow-traveller, with earnest voice,
As if the thought were but a moment old,
Claimed absolute dominion for the day.
We started—and he led me toward the hills
Up through an ample vale, with higher hills
Before us, mountains stern and desolate ;
But, in the majesty of distance, now
Set off, and to our ken appearing fair
Of aspect, with aerial softness clad,
And beautified with morning's purple beams.

The wealthy, the luxurious, by the stress
Of business roused, or pleasure, ere their time,
May roll in chariots, or provoke the hoofs
Of the fleet coursers they bestride, to raise
From earth the dust of morning, slow to rise ;
And they, if blest with health and hearts at ease,
Shall lack not their enjoyment :—but how faint
Compared with ours ! who, pacing side by side,
Could, with an eye of leisure, look on all

That we beheld ; and lend the listening sense
To every grateful sound of earth and air ;
Pausing at will—our spirits braced, our thoughts
Pleasant as roses in the thickets blown,
And pure as dew bathing their crimson leaves.

Mount slowly, sun ! that we may journey long,
By this dark hill protected from thy beams !
Such is the summer pilgrim's frequent wish
But quickly from among our morning thoughts
'Twas chased away : for, toward the western side
Of the broad vale, casting a casual glance,
We saw a throng of people ;—wherefore met ?
Blithe notes of music, suddenly let loose
On the thrilled ear, and flags uprising, yield
Prompt answer ; they proclaim the annual Wake,
Which the bright season favors.—Tabor and pipe
In purpose join to hasten or reprove
The laggard Rustic ; and repay with boons
Of merriment a party-colored knot,
Already formed upon the village-green.
—Beyond the limits of the shadow cast
By the broad hill, glistened upon our sight
That gay assemblage. Round them and above,
Glitter, with dark recesses interposed,
Casement, and cottage-roof, and stems of trees
Half-veiled in vapory cloud, the silver steam
Of dews fast melting on their leafy boughs
By the strong sunbeams smitten. Like a mast
Of gold, the Maypole shines ; as if the rays
Of morning, aided by exhaling dew,
With gladsome influence could re-animate
The faded garlands dangling from its sides.

Said I, "The music and the sprightly scene
Invite us ; shall we quit our road, and join
These festive matins ?"—He replied, " Not loth
To linger I would here with you partake,
Not one hour merely, but till evening's close,
The simple pastimes of the day and place.
By the fleet Racers, ere the sun be set,
The turf of yon large pasture will be skimmed ;
There, too, the lusty Wrestlers shall contend :
But know we not that he, who intermits
The appointed task and duties of the day,
Untunes full oft the pleasures of the day ;
Checking the finer spirits that refuse
To flow, when purposes are lightly changed ?
A length of journey yet remains untraced :
Let us proceed." Then, pointing with his staff
Raised toward those craggy summits, his intent
He thus imparted :—

" In a spot that lies
Among yon mountain fastnesses concealed,
You will receive, before the hour of noon,
Good recompense, I hope, for this day's toil,
From sight of One who lives secluded there,
Lonesome and lost : of whom, and whose past life,
(Not to forestall such knowledge as may be
More faithfully collected from himself)
This brief communication shall suffice.

Though now sojourning there, he, like myself,
Sprang from a stock of lowly parentage
Among the wilds of Scotland, in a tract
Where many a sheltered and well-tended plant,
Bears, on the humblest ground of social life,

Blossoms of piety and innocence.
Such grateful promises his youth displayed :
And, having shown in study forward zeal,
He to the Ministry was duly called ;
And straight, incited by a curious mind
Filled with vague hopes, he undertook the charge
Of Chaplain to a military troop,
Cheered by the Highland bagpipe, as they marched
In plaided vest,—his fellow-countrymen.
This office filling, yet by native power
And force of native inclination made
An intellectual ruler in the haunts
Of social vanity, he walked the world,
Gay, and affecting graceful gaiety ;
Lax, buoyant—less a pastor with his flock
Than a soldier among soldiers—lived and roamed
Where Fortune led :—and Fortune, who oft proves
The careless wanderer's friend, to him made known
A blooming Lady—a conspicuous flower,
Admired for beauty, for her sweetness praised ;
Whom he had sensibility to love,
Ambition to attempt, and skill to win.

For this fair Bride, most rich in gifts of mind,
Nor sparingly endowed with worldly wealth,
His office he relinquished ; and retired
From the world's notice to a rural home.
Youth's season yet with him was scarcely past,
And she was in youth's prime. How free their love,
How full their joy ! "Till, pitiable doom !
In the short course of one undreaded year,
Death blasted all. Death suddenly o'erthrew
Two lovely Children—all that they possessed !

The Mother followed :—miserably bare
The one Survivor stood ; he wept, he prayed
For his dismissal, day and night, compelled.
To hold communion with the grave, and face
With pain the regions of eternity.

An uncomplaining apathy displaced
This anguish ; and, indifferent to delight,
To aim and purpose, he consumed his days,
To private interest dead, and public care.
So lived he ; so he might have died.

But now,
To the wide world's astonishment, appeared
A glorious opening, the unlooked-for dawn,
That promised everlasting joy to France !
Her voice of social transport reached even him !
He broke from his contracted bounds, repaired
To the great City, an emporium then
Of golden expectations, and receiving
Freights every day from a new world of hope.
Thither his popular talents he transferred ;
And, from the pulpit, zealously maintained
The cause of Christ and civil liberty,
As one, and moving to one glorious end.
Intoxicating service ! I might say
A happy service ; for he was sincere
As vanity and fondness for applause,
And new and shapeless wishes, would allow.

That righteous cause (such power hath freedom)
bound,
For one hostility, in friendly league,
Ethereal natures and the worst of slaves ;
Was served by rival advocates that came

From regions opposite as heaven and hell.
One courage seemed to animate them all :
And, from the dazzling conquests daily gained
By their united efforts, there arose
A proud and most presumptuous confidence
In the transcendent wisdom of the age,
And her discernment ; not alone in rights,
And in the origin and bounds of power
Social and temporal ; but in laws divine,
Deduced by reason, or to faith revealed.
An overweening trust was raised ; and fear
Cast out, alike of person and of thing.
Plague from this union spread, whose subtle bane
The strongest did not easily escape ;
And He, what wonder ! took a mortal taint.
How shall I trace the change, how bear to tell
That he broke faith with them whom he had laid
In earth's dark chambers, with a Christian's hope !
An infidel contempt of holy writ
Stole by degrees upon his mind ; and hence
Life, like that Roman Janus, double-faced ;
Vilest hypocrisy—the laughing, gay
Hypocrisy, not leagued with fear, but pride.
Smooth words he had to wheedle simple souls ;
But, for disciples of the inner school,
Old freedom was old servitude, and they
The wisest whose opinions stooped the least
To known restraints ; and who most boldly drew
Hopeful prognostications from a creed,
That, in the light of false philosophy,
Spread like a halo round a misty moon,
Widening its circle as the storms advance.

His sacred function was at length renounced ;
And every day and every place enjoyed
The unshackled layman's natural liberty ;
Speech, manners, morals, all without disguise.
I do not wish to wrong him ; though the course
Of private life licentiously displayed
Unhallowed actions—planted like a crown
Upon the insolent aspiring brow
Of spurious notions—worn as open signs
Of prejudice subdued—still he retained,
Mid much abasement, what he had received
From nature, an intense and glowing mind.
Wherefore, when humbled Liberty grew weak,
And mortal sickness on her face appeared,
He colored objects to his own desire
As with a lover's passion. Yet his moods
Of pain were keen as those of better men,
Nay keener, as his fortitude was less :
And he continued, when worse days were come,
To deal about his sparkling eloquence,
Struggling against the strange reverse with zeal
That shewed like happiness. But, in despite
Of all this outside bravery, within,
He neither felt encouragement nor hope :
For moral dignity, and strength of mind,
Were wanting ; and simplicity of life ;
And reverence for himself ; and, last and best,
Confiding thoughts, through love and fear of Him
Before whose sight the troubles of this world
Are vain, as billows in a tossing sea.

The glory of the times fading away—
The splendor, which had given a festal air

To self-importance, hallowed it, and veiled
From his own sight—this gone, he forfeited
All joy in human nature ; was consumed,
And vexed, and chafed, by levity and scorn,
And fruitless indignation ; galled by pride ;
Made desperate by contempt of men who threw
Before his sight in power or fame, and won,
Without desert, what he desired ; weak men,
Too weak even for his envy or his hate.
Tormented thus, after a wandering course
Of discontent, and inwardly opprest
With malady—in part, I fear, provoked
By weariness of life—he fixed his home,
Or, rather say, sate down by very chance,
Among these rugged hills ; where now he dwells,
And wastes the sad remainder of his hours,
Steeped in a self-indulging spleen, that wants not
Its own voluptuousness ;—on this resolved,
With this content, that he will live and die
Forgotten,—at safe distance from ‘a world
Not moving to his mind.’”

These serious words

Closed the preparatory notices
That served my Fellow-traveller to beguile
The way, while we advanced up that wide vale.
Diverging now (as if his quest had been
Some secret of the mountains, cavern, fall
Of water, or some lofty eminence,
Renowned for splendid prospect far and wide)
We scaled, without a track to ease our steps,
A steep ascent ; and reached a dreary plain,
With a tumultuous waste of huge hill tops
Before us ; savage region ! which I paced

Dispirited : when, all at once, behold !
Beneath our feet, a little lowly vale,
A lowly vale, and yet uplifted high
Among the mountains ; even as if the spot
Had been from eldest time by wish of theirs
So placed, to be shut out from all the world !
Urn-like it was in shape, deep as an urn ;
With rocks encompassed, save that to the south
Was one small opening, where a heath-clad ridge
Supplied a boundary less abrupt and close ;
A quiet, treeless nook, with two green fields,—
A liquid pool that glittered in the sun,
And one bare dwelling ; one abode, no more !
It seemed the home of poverty and toil,
Though not of want : the little fields, made green
By husbandry of many thrifty years,
Paid cheerful tribute to the moorland house.
—There crows the cock, single in his domain :
The small birds find in spring no thicket there
To shroud them ; only from the neighboring vales
The cuckoo, straggling up to the hill tops,
Shouteth faint tidings of some gladder place.

Ah ! what a sweet Recess, thought I, is here !
Instantly throwing down my limbs at ease
Upon a bed of heath ;—full many a spot
Of hidden beauty have I chanced to espy
Among the mountains ; never one like this ;
So lonesome, and so perfectly secure ;
Not melancholy—no, for it is green,
And bright, and fertile, furnished in itself
With the few needful things that life requires.
—In rugged arms how softly does it lie,

THE SOLITARY.

How tenderly protected ! Far and near
We have an image of the pristine earth,
The planet in its nakedness: were this
Man's only dwelling, sole appointed seat,
First, last, and single, in the breathing world,
It could not be more quiet : peace is here
Or nowhere ; days unruffled by the gale
Of public news or private ; years that pass
Forgetfully ; uncalled upon to pay
The common penalties of mortal life,
Sickness, or accident, or grief, or pain.

On these and kindred thoughts intent I lay
In silence musing by my Comrade's side,
He also silent; when from out the heart
Of that profound abyss a solemn voice,
Or several voices in one solemn sound,
Was heard ascending ; mournful, deep, and slow
The cadence, as of psalms—a funeral dirge !
We listened, looking down upon the hut,
But seeing no one : meanwhile from below
The strain continued, spiritual as before ;
And now distinctly could I recognise
These words :—‘ *Shall in the grave thy love be known,*
In death thy faithfulness ?’—“ God rest his soul !”
Said the old man, abruptly breaking silence,—
“ He is departed, and finds peace at last !”

This scarcely spoken, and those holy strains
Not ceasing, forth appeared in view a band
Of rustic persons, from behind the hut
Bearing a coffin in the midst, with which
They shaped their course along the sloping side

Of that small valley, singing as they moved ;
A sober company and few, the men
Bare-headed, and all decently attired !
Some steps when they had thus advanced, the dirge
Ended ; and, from the stillness that ensued
Recovering, to my Friend I said, " You spake,
Methought, with apprehension that these rites
Are paid to Him upon whose shy retreat
This day we purposed to intrude."—" I did so,
But let us hence, that we may learn the truth :
Perhaps it is not he but some one else
For whom this pious service is performed ;
Some other tenant of the solitude."

So, to a steep and difficult descent
Trusting ourselves, we wound from crag to crag,
Where passage could be won ; and, as the last
Of the mute train, behind the heathy top
Of that off-sloping outlet, disappeared,
I, more impatient in my downward course,
Had landed upon easy ground ; and there
Stood waiting for my Comrade. When behold
An object that enticed my steps aside !
A narrow, winding entry opened out
Into a platform—that lay, sheepfold-wise,
Enclosed between an upright mass of rock
And one old moss-grown wall ;—a cool recess,
And fanciful ! For where the rock and wall
Met in an angle, hung a penthouse, framed
By thrusting two rude staves into the wall
And overlaying them with mountain sods ;
To weather-fend a little turf-built seat
Whereon a full-grown man might rest, nor dread

The burning sunshine, or a transient shower ;
But the whole plainly wrought by children's hands !
Whose skill had thronged the floor with a proud show
Of baby-houses, curiously arranged ;
Nor wanting ornament of walks between,
With mimic trees inserted in the turf,
And gardens interposed. Pleased with the sight,
I could not choose but beckon to my Guide,
Who, entering, round him threw a careless glance,
Impatient to pass on, when I exclaimed,
“ Lo ! what is here ? ” and, stooping down, drew forth
A book, that, in the midst of stones and moss
And wreck of party-colored earthenware,
Aptly disposed, had lent its help to raise
One of those petty structures. “ His it must be ! ”
Exclaimed the Wanderer, “ cannot but be his,
And he is gone ! ” The book, which in my hand
Had opened of itself (for it was swoln
With searching damp, and seemingly had lain
To the injurious elements exposed
From week to week,) I found to be a work
In the French tongue, a Novel of Voltaire,
His famous Optimist. “ Unhappy Man ! ”
Exclaimed my Friend : “ here then has been to him
Retreat within retreat, a sheltering-place
Within how deep a shelter ! He had fits,
Even to the last, of genuine tenderness,
And loved the haunts of children : here, no doubt,
Pleasing and pleased, he shared their simple sports,
Or sate companionless ; and here the book,
Left and forgotten in his careless way,
Must by the cottage-children have been found :
Heaven bless them, and their inconsiderate work !

6*

To what odd purpose have the darlings turned
This sad memorial of their hapless friend!"

"Me," said I, "most doth it surprise, to find
Such book in such a place!"—"A book it is,"
He answered, "to the Person suited well,
Though little suited to surrounding things:
'Tis strange, I grant; and stranger still had been
To see the Man who owned it, dwelling here,
With one poor shepherd, far from all the world!—
Now, if our errand hath been thrown away,
As from these intimations I forebode,
Grieved shall I be—less for my sake than yours,
And least of all for him who is no more."

By this, the book was in the old Man's hand;
And he continued, glancing on the leaves
An eye of scorn:—"The lover," said he, "doomed
To love when hope hath failed him—whom no depth
Of privacy is deep enough to hide,
Hath yet his bracelet or his lock of hair,
And that is joy to him. When change of times
Hath summoned kings to scaffolds, do but give
The faithful servant, who must hide his head
Henceforth in whatsoever nook he may,
A kerchief sprinkled with his master's blood,
And he too hath his comforter. How poor,
Beyond all poverty how destitute,
Must that Man have been left, who, hither driven,
Flying or seeking, could yet bring with him
No dearer relique, and no better stay,
Than this dull product of a scoffer's pen,
Impure conceits discharging from a heart

Hardened by impious pride!—I did not fear
To tax you with this journey ;”—mildly said
My venerable friend; as forth we stepped
Into the presence of the cheerful light—
“ For I have knowledge that you do not shrink
From moving spectacle;—but let us on.”

So speaking, on he went, and at the word
I followed, till he made a sudden stand :
For full in view, approaching through a gate
That opened from the enclosure of green fields
Into the rough uncultivated ground,
Behold the Man whom he had fancied dead !
I knew from his deportment, mien, and dress,
That it could be no other ; a pale face,
A meagre person, tall, and in a garb
Not rustic—dull and faded like himself !
He saw us not, though distant but few steps ;
For he was busy, dealing, from a store
Upon a broad leaf carried, choicest strings
Of red-ripe currants ; gift by which he strove,
With intermixture of endearing words,
To soothe a Child, who walked beside him, weeping
As if disconsolate.—“ They to the grave
Are bearing him, my Little-one,” he said,
“ To the dark pit ; but he will feel no pain ;
His body is at rest, his soul in Heaven.”

More might have followed—but my honored
Friend
Broke in upon the Speaker with a frank
And cordial greeting.—Vivid was the light
That flashed and sparkled from the other’s eyes ;

He was all fire: no shadow on his brow
Remained, nor sign of sickness on his face.
Hands joined he with his Visitant,—a grasp,
An eager grasp; and many moments' space—
When the first glow of pleasure was no more,
And, of the sad appearance which at once
Had vanished, much was come and coming back—
An amicable smile retained the life
Which it had unexpectedly received,
Upon his hollow cheek. “How kind,” he said,
“Nor could your coming have been better timed;
For this, you see, is in our narrow world
A day of sorrow. I have here a charge”—
And, speaking thus, he patted tenderly
The sun-burnt forehead of the weeping child—
“A little mourner, whom it is my task
To comfort;—but how came ye?—if yon track
(Which doth at once befriend us and betray)
Conducted hither your most welcome feet,
Ye could no^t miss the funeral train—they yet
Have scarcely disappeared.” “This blooming Child,”
Said the old Man, is of an age to weep
At any grave or solemn spectacle,
Inly distressed or overpowered with awe,
He knows not wherefore;—but the boy to-day,
Perhaps is shedding orphan's tears; you also
Must have sustained a loss.”—“The hand of Death,
He answered, has been here; but could not well
Have fallen more lightly, if it had not fallen
Upon myself.”—The other left these words
Unnoticed, thus continuing.—

“From yon crag,
Down whose steep sides we dropped into the vale,

We heard the hymn they sang—a solemn sound
Heard anywhere; but in a place like this
'Tis more than human! Many precious rites
And customs of our rural ancestry
Are gone, or stealing from us; this, I hope,
Will last for ever. Oft on my way have I
Stood still, though but a casual passenger,
So much I felt the awfulness of life,
In that one moment when the corse is lifted
In silence, with a hush of decency;
Then from the threshold moves with song of peace,
And confidential yearnings, tow'rs its home,
Its final home on earth. What traveller—who—
(How far soe'er a stranger) does not own
The bond of brotherhood, when he sees them go,
A mute procession on the houseless road;
Or passing by some single tenement
Or clustered dwellings, where again they raise
The monitory voice? But most of all
It touches, it confirms, and elevates,
Then, when the body, soon to be consigned
Ashes to ashes, dust bequeathed to dust,
Is raised from the church-aisle, and forward borne
Upon the shoulders of the next in love,
The nearest in affection or in blood;
Yea, by the very mourners who had knelt
Beside the coffin, resting on its lid
In silent grief their unuplifted heads,
And heard meanwhile the Psalmist's mournful plaint,
And that most awful scripture which declares
We shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed!
—Have I not seen—ye likewise may have seen—
Son, husband, brothers—brothers side by side,

And son and father also side by side,
Rise from that posture :—and in concert move,
On the green turf following the vested Priest,
Four dear supporters of one senseless weight,
From which they do not shrink, and under which
They faint not, but advance towards the open grave
Step after step—together, with their firm
Unhidden faces ; he that suffers most,
He outwardly, and inwardly perhaps,
The most serene, with most undaunted eye !—
Oh ! blest are they who live and die like these,
Loved with such love, and with such sorrow
mourned !”

“ That poor Man taken hence to-day,” replied
The Solitary, with a faint sarcastic smile
Which did not please me, “ must be deemed, I fear,
Of the unblest ; for he will surely sink
Into his mother earth without such pomp
Of grief, depart without occasion given
By him for such array of fortitude.
Full seventy winters hath he lived, and mark !
This simple Child will mourn his one short hour,
And I shall miss him ; scanty tribute ! yet,
This wanting, he would leave the sight of men,
If love were his sole claim upon their care,
Like a ripe date which in the desert falls
Without a hand to gather it.”

At this
I interposed, though loth to speak, and said,
“ Can it be thus among so small a band
As ye must needs be here ? in such a place
I would not willingly, methinks, lose sight

Of a departing cloud."—"T was not for love,"
Answered the sick Man with a careless voice—
"That I came hither; neither have I found
Among associates who have power of speech,
Nor in such other converse as is here,
Temptation so prevailing as to change
That mood, or undermine my first resolve."
Then, speaking in like careless sort, he said
To my benign Companion,—"Pity 't is
That fortune did not guide you to this house
A few days earlier; then would you have seen
What stuff the Dwellers in a solitude,
That seems by Nature hollowed out to be
The seat and bosom of pure innocence,
Are made of; an ungracious matter this!
Which, for truth's sake, yet in remembrance too
Of past discussions with this zealous friend
And advocate of humble life, I now
Will force upon his notice; undeterred
By the example of his own pure course,
And that respect and deference which a soul
May fairly claim, by niggard age enriched
In what she most doth value, love of God
And his frail creature Man;—but ye shall hear.
I talk—and ye are standing in the sun
Without refreshment!"

Quickly had he spoken,
And, with light steps still quicker than his words,
Led toward the Cottage. Homely was the spot;
And, to my feeling, ere we reached the door,
Had almost a forbidding nakedness;
Less fair, I grant, even painfully less fair,
Than it appeared when from the beetling rock

We had looked down upon it. All within,
As left by the departed company,
Was silent, save the solitary clock
That on mine ear ticked with a mournful sound.—
Following our Guide, we clomb the cottage-stairs
And reached a small apartment dark and low,
Which was no sooner entered than our Host
Said gaily, “ This is my domain, my cell,
My hermitage, my cabin, what you will—
I love it better than a snail his house.
But now ye shall be feasted with our best.”

So, with more ardor than an unripe girl
Left one day mistress of her mother's stores,
He went about his hospitable task.
My eyes were busy, and my thoughts no less,
And pleased I looked upon my grey-haired Friend,
As if to thank him ; he returned that look,
Cheered, plainly, and yet serious. What a wreck
Had we about us ! scattered was the floor,
And, in like sort, chair, window-seat, and shelf,
With books, maps, fossils, withered plants and
flowers,
And tufts of mountain moss. Mechanic tools
Lay intermixed with scraps of paper, some
Scribbled with verse : a broken angling-rod
And shattered telescope, together linked
By cobwebs, stood within a dusty nook ;
And instruments of music, some half-made,
Some in disgrace, hung dangling from the walls.
But speedily the promise was fulfilled ;
A feast before us, and a courteous Host
Inviting us in glee to sit and eat.

A napkin, white as foam of that rough brook
By which it had been bleached, o'erspread the board ;
And was itself half-covered with a store
Of dainties,—oaten bread, curd, cheese, and cream ;
And cakes of butter curiously embossed,
Butter that had imbibed from meadow-flowers
A golden hue, delicate as their own
Faintly reflected in a lingering stream.
Nor lacked, for more delight on that warm day,
Our table, small parade of garden fruits,
And whortle-berries from the mountain side.
The Child, who long ere this had stilled his sobs,
Was now a help to his late comforter,
And moved, a willing Page, as he was bid,
Ministering to our need.

In genial mood,
While at our pastoral banquet thus we sate
Fronting the window of that little cell,
I could not, ever and anon, forbear
To glance an upward look on two huge Peaks,
That from some other vale peered into this.
“Those lusty twins,” exclaimed our host, “if here
It were your lot to dwell, would soon become
Your prized companions.—Many are the notes
Which, in his tuneful course, the wind draws forth
From rocks, woods, caverns, heaths, and dashing
shores ;
And well those lofty brethren bear their part
In the wild concert—chiefly when the storm
Rides high ; then all the upper air they fill
With roaring sound, that ceases not to flow,
Like smoke, along the level of the blast,
In mighty current ; theirs, too, is the song

Of stream and headlong flood that seldom fails ;
And, in the grim and breathless hour of noon,
Methinks that I have heard them echo back
The thunder's greeting. Nor have nature's laws
Left them ungifted with a power to yield
Music of finer tone ; a harmony,
So do I call it, though it be the hand
Of silence, though there be no voice ;—the clouds,
The mist, the shadows, light of golden suns,
Motions of moonlight, all come thither—touch,
And have an answer—thither come, and shape
A language not unwelcome to sick hearts
And idle spirits :—there the sun himself,
At the calm close of summer's longest day
Rests his substantial orb ;—between those heights
And on the top of either pinnacle,
More keenly than elsewhere in night's blue vault,
Sparkle the stars, as of their station proud.
Thoughts are not busier in the mind of man
Than the mute agents stirring there :—alone
Here do I sit and watch.—”

A fall of voice,
Regretted like the nightingale's last note,
Had scarcely closed this high-wrought strain of
rapture
Ere with inviting smile the Wanderer said :
“ Now for the tale with which you threatened us ! ”
“ In truth the threat escaped me unawares :
Should the tale tire you, let this challenge stand
For my excuse. Dissevered from mankind,
As to your eyes and thoughts we must have seemed
When ye looked down upon us from the crag,
Islanders mid a stormy mountain sea,

We are not so ;—perpetually we touch
Upon the vulgar ordinances of the world ;
And he, whom this our cottage hath to-day
Relinquished, lived dependent for his bread
Upon the laws of public charity.
The Housewife, tempted by such slender gains
As might from that occasion be distilled,
Opened, as she before had done for me,
Her doors to admit this homeless Pensioner ;
The portion gave of coarse but wholesome fare
Which appetite required—a blind dull nook,
Such as she had, the *kennel* of his rest !
This, in itself not ill, would yet have been
Ill borne in earlier life ; but his was now
The still contentedness of seventy years.
Calm did he sit under the wide-spread tree
Of his old age ; and yet less calm and meek,
Winningly meek or venerably calm,
Than slow and torpid ; paying in this wise
A penalty, if penalty it were,
For spendthrift feats, excesses of his prime.
I loved the old Man, for I pitied him !
A task it was, I own, to hold discourse
With one so slow in gathering up his thoughts,
But he was a cheap pleasure to my eyes ;
Mild, inoffensive, ready in *his* way,
And helpful to his utmost power : and there
Our housewife knew full well what she possessed !
He was her vassal of all labor, tilled
Her garden, from the pasture fetched her kine ;
And, one among the orderly array
Of hay-makers, beneath the burning sun
Maintained his place ; or heedfully pursued

His course, on errands bound, to other vales,
Leading sometimes an inexperienced child
Too young for any profitable task.
So moved he like a shadow that performed
Substantial service. Mark me now, and learn
For what reward!—The moon her monthly round
Hath not completed since our dame, the queen
Of this one cottage and this lonely dale,
Into my little sanctuary rushed—
Voice to a rueful treble humanized,
And features in deplorable dismay.
I treat the matter lightly, but, alas!
It is most serious: persevering rain
Had fallen in torrents; all the mountain tops
Were hidden, and black vapors coursed their sides;
This had I seen, and saw; but, till she spake,
Was wholly ignorant that my ancient Friend—
Who at her bidding, early and alone,
Had climb aloft to delve the moorland turf
For winter fuel—to his noontide meal
Returned not, and now, haply, on the heights
Lay at the mercy of this raging storm.
'Inhuman!'—said I, 'was an old Man's life
Not worth the trouble of a thought?—alas!
This notice comes too late.' With joy I saw
Her husband enter—from a distant vale.
We sallied forth together; found the tools
Which the neglected veteran had dropped,
But through all quarters looked for him in vain.
We shouted—but no answer! Darkness fell
Without remission of the blast or shower,
And fears for our own safety drove us home.

I, who weep little, did, I will confess,
The moment I was seated here alone,
Honor my little cell with some few tears
Which anger and resentment could not dry.
All night the storm endured ; and, soon as help
Had been collected from the neighbouring vale,
With morning we renewed our quest : the wind
Was fallen, the rain abated, but the hills
Lay shrouded in impenetrable mist ;
And long and hopelessly we sought in vain :
'Till, chancing on that lofty ridge to pass
A heap of ruin—almost without walls
And wholly without roof (the bleached remains
Of a small chapel, where, in ancient time,
The peasants of these lonely valleys used
To meet for worship on that central height)—
We there espied the object of our search,
Lying full three parts buried among tufts
Of heath-plant, under and above him strewn,
To baffle, as he might, the watery storm :
And there we found him breathing peaceably,
Snug as a child that hides itself in sport
'Mid a green hay-cock in a sunny field.
We spake—he made reply, but would not stir
At our entreaty : less from want of power
Than apprehension and bewildering thoughts.

So was he lifted gently from the ground,
And with their freight homeward the shepherds
moved
Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
A single step, that freed me from the skirts
Of the blind vapor, opened to my view

Glory beyond all glory ever seen
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul !
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
Was of a mighty city—boldly say
A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
Far sinking into splendor—without end !
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted ; here, serene pavilions bright,
In avenues disposed ; there, towers begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars—illumination of all gems !
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
Upon the dark materials of the storm
Now pacified ; on them, and on the coves
And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
The vapors had receded, taking there
Their station under a cerulean sky.
Oh, 't was an unimaginable sight !
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald
turf,
Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky.
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped.
Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
Of open court, an object like a throne
Under a shining canopy of state

Stood fixed ; and fixed resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified ;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest power
For admiration and mysterious awe.
This little Vale, a dwelling place of Man,
Lay low beneath my feet ; 't was visible—
I saw not, but I felt that it was there.
That which I *saw* was the revealed abode
Of Spirits in beatitude : my heart
Swelled in my breast.—‘ I have been dead,’ I cried,
‘ And now I live ! Oh ! wherefore *do* I live ?’
And with that pang I prayed to be no more !—
—But I forgot our Charge, as utterly
I then forgot him :—there I stood and gazed :
The apparition faded not away,
And I descended.

Having reached the house,
I found its rescued inmate safely lodged,
And in serene possession of himself,
Beside a fire whose genial warmth seemed met
By a faint shining from the heart, a gleam
Of comfort, spread over his pallid face.
Great show of joy the housewife made, and truly
Was glad to find her conscience set at ease ;
And not less glad, for sake of her good name,
That the poor Sufferer had escaped with life.
But, though he seemed at first to have received
No harm, and uncomplaining as before
Went through his usual tasks, a silent change
Soon showed itself : he lingered three short weeks ;
And from the cottage hath been borne to-day.

So ends my dolorous tale, and glad I am
That it is ended." At these words he turned—
And, with blithe air of open fellowship,
Brought from the cupboard wine and stouter cheer,
Like one who would be merry. Seeing this,
My grey-haired Friend said courteously—" Nay,
nay,
You have regaled us as a hermit ought ;
Now let us forth into the sun!"—Our Host
Rose, though reluctantly, and forth we went.

THE EXCURSION.

BOOK THIRD.

DESPONDENCY.

DESPONDENCY.

ARGUMENT.

Images in the Valley.—Another Recess in it entered and described.—Wanderer's sensations.—Solitary's excited by the same objects.—Contrast between these.—Despondency of the Solitary gently reproved.—Conversation exhibiting the Solitary's past and present opinions and feelings, till he enters upon his own History at length.—His domestic felicity—Afflictions.—Dejection.—Roused by the French Revolution.—Disappointment and disgust.—Voyage to America.—Disappointment and disgust pursue him.—His return.—His languor and depression of mind, from want of faith in the great truths of Religion, and want of confidence in the virtue of Mankind.

A HUMMING BEE—a little tinkling rill—
A pair of falcons wheeling on the wing,
In clamorous agitation, round the crest
Of a tall rock, their airy citadel—
By each and all of these the pensive ear
Was greeted, in the silence that ensued,
When through the cottage-threshold we had passed,
And, deep within that lonesome valley, stood
Once more beneath the concave of a blue
And cloudless sky.—Anon exclaimed our Host,
Triumphantly dispersing with the taunt
The shade of discontent which on his brow
Had gathered,—“ Ye have left my cell,—but see

How Nature hembs you in with friendly arms !
And by her help ye are my prisoners still.
But which way shall I lead you ?—how contrive,
In spot so parsimoniously endowed,
That the brief hours, which yet remain, may reap
Some recompense of knowledge or delight ?”
So saying, round he looked, as if perplexed ;
And, to remove those doubts, my grey-haired
Friend

Said—“ Shall we take this pathway for our guide ?—
Upward it winds, as if, in summer heats,
Its line had first been fashioned by the flock
Seeking a place of refuge at the root
Of yon black Yew-tree, whose protruded boughs
Darken the silver bosom of the crag,
From which she draws her meagre sustenance.
There in commodious shelter may we rest.
Or let us trace this streamlet to its source ;
Feebly it tinkles with an earthy sound,
And a few steps may bring us to the spot
Where, haply, crowned with flowerets and green
herbs,
The mountain infant to the sun comes forth,
Like human life from darkness.”—A quick turn
Through a strait passage of encumbered ground,
Proved that such hope was vain :—for now we stood
Shut out from prospect of the open vale,
And saw the water, that composed this rill,
Descending, disembodied, and diffused
O'er the smooth surface of an ample crag,
Lofty, and steep, and naked as a tower.
All further progress here was barred ;—And who,
Thought I, if master of a vacant hour,

Here would not linger, willingly detained ?
Whether to such wild objects he were led
When copious rains have magnified the stream
Into a loud and white-robed waterfall,
Or introduced at this more quiet time.

Upon a semicirque of turf-clad ground,
The hidden nook discovered to our view
A moss of rock, resembling, as it lay
Right at the foot of that moist precipice,
A stranded ship, with keel upturned, that rests
Fearless of winds and waves. Three several stones
Stood near, of smaller size, and not unlike
To monumental pillars : and, from these
Some little space disjoined, a pair were seen,
That with united shoulders bore aloft
A fragment, like an altar, flat and smooth :
Barren the tablet, yet thereon appeared
A tall and shining holly, that had found
A hospitable chink, and stood upright,
As if inserted by some human hand
In mockery, to wither in the sun,
Or lay its beauty flat before a breeze,
The first that entered. But no breeze did now
Find entrance ;—high or low appeared no trace
Of motion, save the water that descended,
Diffused adown that barrier of steep rock.
And softly creeping, like a breath of air,
Such as is sometimes seen, and hardly seen,
To brush the still breast of a crystal lake.

“ Behold a cabinet for sages built,
Which kings might envy !”—Praise to this effect

Broke from the happy old Man's reverend lip;
Who to the Solitary turned, and said,
" In sooth, with love's familiar privilege,
You have decried the wealth which is your own.
Among these rocks and stones, methinks, I see
More than the heedless impress that belongs
To lonely nature's casual work : they bear
A semblance strange of power intelligent,
And of design not wholly worn away.
Boldest of plants that ever faced the wind,
How gracefully that slender shrub looks forth
From its fantastic birth-place ! And I own,
Some shadowy intimations haunt me here,
That in these shows a chronicle survives
Of purposes akin to those of Man,
But wrought with mightier arm than now prevails.
—Voiceless the stream descends into the gulf
With timid lapse ;—and lo ! while in this strait
I stand—the chasm of sky above my head
Is heaven's profoundest azure; no domain
For fickle, short-lived clouds to occupy,
Or to pass through ; but rather an abyss
In which the everlasting stars abide ;
And whose soft gloom, and boundless depth, might
tempt
The curious eye to look for them by day.
—Hail Contemplation ! from the stately towers,
Reared by the industrious hand of human art
To lift thee high above the misty air
And turbulence of murmuring cities vast ;
From academic groves, that have for thee
Been planted, hither come and find a lodge
To which thou mayst resort for holier peace,—

From whose calm centre thou, through height or depth,
Mayst penetrate, wherever truth shall lead ;
Measuring through all degrees, until the scale
Of time and conscious nature disappear,
Lost in unsearchable eternity.”*

A pause ensued ; and with minuter care
We scanned the various features of the scene .
And soon the Tenant of that lonely vale
With courteous voice thus spake—

“I should have grieved
Hereafter, not escaping self-reproach,
If from my poor retirement ye had gone
Leaving this nook unvisited : but, in sooth,
Your unexpected presence had so roused
My spirits, that they were bent on enterprise ;
And, like an ardent hunter, I forgot,
Or, shall I say ?—disdained, the game that lurks
At my own door. The shapes before our eyes
And their arrangement, doubtless must be deemed
The sport of Nature, aided by blind Chance
Rudely to mock the works of toiling Man.
And hence, this upright shaft of unhewn stone,
From Fancy, willing to set off her stores
By sounding titles, hath acquired the name
Of Pompey’s pillar ; that I gravely style
My Theban obelisk ; and, there, behold
A Druid eromlech !—thus I entertain
The antiquarian humor, and am pleased
To skim along the surfaces of things,
Beguiling harmlessly the listless hours.
But if the spirit be oppressed by sense

Of instability, revolt, decay,
And change, and emptiness, these freaks of Nature
And her blind helper Chance, do *then* suffice
To quicken, and to aggravate—to feed
Pity and scorn, and melancholy pride,
Not less than that huge Pile (from some abyss,
Of mortal power unquestionably sprung)
Whose hoary diadem of pendent rocks
Confines the shrill-voiced whirlwind, round and
round
Eddying within its vast circumference,
On Sarum's naked plain—than pyramid
Of Egypt, unsubverted, undissolved—
Or Syria's marble ruins towering high
Above the sandy desert, in the light
Of sun or moon.—Forgive me, if I say,
That an appearance which hath raised your minds
To an exalted pitch (the self-same cause
Different effect producing) is for me
Fraught rather with depression than delight,
Though shame it were, could I not look around,
By the reflection of your pleasure, pleased.
Yet happier in my judgment, even than you
With your bright transports fairly may be deemed,
The wandering Herbalist,—who, clear alike
From vain, and, that worse evil, vexing thoughts,
Casts, if he ever chance to enter here,
Upon these uncouth Forms a slight regard
Of transitory interest, and peeps round
For some rare floweret of the hills, or plant
Of craggy fountain; what he hopes for wins,
Or learns, at least, that 't is not to be won:
Then, keen and eager, as a fine-nosed hound

By soul-engrossing instinct driven along
Through wood or open field, the harmless Man
Departs, intent upon his onward quest!—
Nor is that Fellow-wanderer, so deem I,
Less to be envied, (you may trace him oft
By scars which his activity has left
Beside our roads and pathways, though, thank
Heaven !
This covert nook reports not of his hand)
He who with pocket-hammer smites the edge
Of luckless rock or prominent stone, disguised
In weather-stains or crusted o'er by Nature
With her first growths, detaching by the stroke
A chip or splinter—to resolve his doubts;
And, with that ready answer satisfied,
The substance classes by some barbarous name,
And hurries on; or from the fragments picks
His specimen, if but haply interveined
With sparkling mineral, or should crystal cube
Lurk in its cells—and thinks himself enriched,
Wealthier, and doubtless wiser, than before!
Intrusted safely each to his pursuit,
Earnest alike, let both from hill to hill
Range; if it please them, speed from clime to clime;
The mind is full—and free from pain their pastime."

"Then," said I, interposing, "One is near,
Who cannot but possess in your esteem
Place worthier still of envy. May I name,
Without offence, that fair-faced cottage-boy ?
Dame Nature's pupil of the lowest form,
Youngest apprentice in the school of art!
Him, as we entered from the open glen,

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You might have noticed, busily engaged,
Heart, soul, and hands,—in mending the defects
Left in the fabric of a leaky dam
Raised for enabling this penurious stream
To turn a slender mill (that new-made plaything)
For his delight—the happiest he of all !”

“ Far happiest,” answered the desponding Man,
“ If, such as now he is, he might remain !
Ah ! what avails imagination high
Or question deep ? what profits all that earth,
Or heaven’s blue vault, is suffered to put forth
Of impulse or allurement, for the Soul
To quit the beaten track of life, and soar
Far as she finds a yielding element
In past or future ; far as she can go
Through time or space—if neither in the one,
Nor in the other region, nor in aught
That Fancy, dreaming o’er the map of things,
Hath placed beyond these penetrable bounds,
Words of assurance can be heard ; if nowhere
A habitation, for consummate good,
Or for progressive virtue, by the search
Can be attained,—a better sanctuary
From doubt and sorrow, than the senseless grave ?”

“ Is this,” the grey-haired Wanderer mildly said,
“ The voice, which we so lately overheard,
To that same child, addressing tenderly
The consolations of a hopeful mind ?
‘ *His body is at rest, his soul in Heaven.* ’
These were your words ; and, verily, methinks

Wisdom is oft-times nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar."—

The Other, not displeased,
Promptly replied—" My notion is the same.
And I, without reluctance, could decline
All act of inquisition whence we rise,
And what, when breath hath ceased, we may be-
come.

Here are we, in a bright and breathing world.
Our origin, what matters it ? In lack
Of worthier explanation, say at once
With the American (a thought which suits
The place where now we stand) that certain men
Leapt out together from a rocky cave ;
And these were the first parents of mankind :
Or, if a different image be recalled
By the warm sunshine, and the jocund voice
Of insects chirping out their careless lives
On these soft beds of thyme-besprinkled turf,
Choose, with the gay Athenian, a conceit
As sound—blithe race ! whose mantles were be-
decked
With golden grasshoppers, in sign that they
Had sprung, like those bright creatures, from the soil
Whereon their endless generations dwelt.
But stop !—these theoretic fancies jar
On serious minds : then, as the Hindoos draw
Their holy Ganges from a skiey fount,
Even so deduce the stream of human life
From seats of power divine ; and, hope, or trust,
That our existence winds her stately course
Beneath the sun, like Ganges, to make part
Of a living ocean ; or, to sink engulfed,

Like Niger, in impenetrable sands
And utter darkness : thought which may be faced,
Though comfortless !—

Not of myself I speak ;
Such acquiescence neither doth imply,
In me, a meekly-bending spirit soothed
By natural piety ; nor a lofty mind,
By philosophic discipline prepared
For calm subjection to acknowledged law ;
Pleased to have been, contented not to be.
Such palms I boast not ;—no ! to me, who find,
Reviewing my past way, much to condemn,
Little to praise, and nothing to regret,
(Save some remembrances of dream-like joys
That scarcely seem to have belonged to me)
If I must take my choice between the pair
That rule alternately the weary hours,
Night is than day more acceptable ; sleep
Doth, in my estimate of good, appear
A better state than waking ; death than sleep :
Feelingly sweet is stillness after storm,
Though under covert of the wormy ground !

Yet be it said, in justice to myself,
That in more genial times, when I was free
To explore the destiny of human kind
(Not as an intellectual game pursued
With curious subtlety, from wish to cheat
Irksome sensations ; but by love of truth
Urged on, or haply by intense delight
In feeding thought, wherever thought could feed)
I did not rank with those (too dull or nice,
For to my judgment such they then appeared,

Or too aspiring, thankless at the best)
Who, in this frame of human life, perceive
An object whereunto their souls are tied
In discontented wedlock ; nor did e'er,
From me, those dark impervious shades, that hang
Upon the region whither we are bound,
Exclude a power to enjoy the vital beams
Of present sunshine.—Deities that float
On wings, angelic Spirits ! I could muse
O'er what from eldest time we have been told
Of your bright forms and glorious faculties,
And with the imagination rest content,
Not wishing more ; repining not to tread
The little sinuous path of earthly care,
By flowers embellished, and by springs refreshed.
—‘ Blow winds of autumn !—let your chilling breath
Take the live herbage from the mead, and strip
The shady forest of its green attire,—
And let the bursting clouds to fury rouse
The gentle brooks !—Your desolating sway,
Sheds,’ I exclaimed, ‘ no sadness upon me,
And no disorder in your rage I find.
What dignity, what beauty, in this change
From mild to angry, from sad to gay,
Alternate and revolving ! How benign,
How rich in animation and delight,
How bountiful these elements—compared
With aught, as more desirable and fair,
Devised by fancy for the golden age ;
Or the perpetual warbling that prevails
In Arcady, beneath unaltered skies,
Through the long year in constant quiet bound,
Night hushed as night, and day serene as day !’

—But why this tedious record ?—Age, we know,
Is garrulous ; and solitude is apt
To anticipate the privilege of Age.
From far ye come ; and surely with a hope
Of better entertainment :—let us hence !”

Loth to forsake the spot, and still more loth
To be diverted from our present theme,
I said, “ My thoughts agreeing, Sir, with yours,
Would push this censure farther ;—for, if smiles
Of scornful pity be the just reward
Of Poesy thus courteously employed
In framing models to improve the scheme
Of Man’s existence, and recast the world,
Why should not grave Philosophy be styled,
Herself, a dreamer of a kindred stock,
A dreamer yet more spiritless and dull ?
Yes, shall the fine immunities she boasts
Establish sounder titles of esteem
For her, who (all too timid and reserved
For onset, for resistance too inert,
Too weak for suffering, and for hope too tame)
Placed, among flowery gardens curtained round
With world-excluding groves, the brotherhood
Of soft Epicureans, taught—if they
The ends of being would secure, and win
The crown of wisdom—to yield up their souls
To a voluptuous unconcern, preferring
Tranquillity to all things. Or is she,”
I cried, “ more worthy of regard, the Power,
Who, for the sake of sterner quiet, closed
The Stoic’s heart against the vain approach
Of admiration, and all sense of joy ?”

His countenance gave notice that my zeal
Accorded little with his present mind ;
I ceased, and he resumed.—“ Ah ! gentle Sir,
Slight, if you will, the *means* ; but spare to slight
The *end* of those, who did, by system, rank,
As the prime object of a wise man’s aim,
Security from shock of accident,
Release from fear ; and cherished peaceful days
For their own sakes, as mortal life’s chief good,
And only reasonable felicity.
What motive drew, what impulse, I would ask,
Through a long course of later ages, drove,
The hermit to his cell in forest wide ;
Or what detained him, till his closing eyes
Took their last farewell of the sun and stars,
Fast anchored in the desert ?—Not alone
Dread of the persecuting sword, remorse,
Wrongs unredressed, or insults unavenged
And unavengeable, defeated pride,
Prosperity subverted, maddening want,
Friendship betrayed, affection unreturned,
Love with despair, or grief in agony ;—
Not always from intolerable pangs
He fled ; but, compassed round by pleasure, sighed
For independent happiness ; craving peace,
The central feeling of all happiness,
Not as a refuge from distress or pain,
A breathing-time, vacation, or a truce,
But for its absolute self : a life of peace,
Stability without regret or fear ;
That hath been, is, and shall be evermore !—
Such the reward he sought ; and wore out life,
There, where on few external things his heart

Was set, and those his own ; or, if not his,
Subsisting under nature's stedfast law.

What other yearning was the master tie
Of the monastic brotherhood, upon rock
Aërial, or in green secluded vale,
One after one, collected from afar,
An undissolving fellowship ?—What but this,
The universal instinct of repose,
The longing for confirmed tranquillity,
Inward and outward ; humble, yet sublime :
The life where hope and memory are as one :
Where earth is quiet and her face unchanged
Save by the simplest toil of human hands
Or seasons' difference ; the immortal Soul
Consistent in self-rule ; and heaven revealed
To meditation in that quietness !—
Such was their scheme : and though the wished-for
end
By multitudes was missed, perhaps attained
By none, they for the attempt, and pains employed,
Do, in my present censure, stand redeemed
From the unqualified disdain, that once
Would have been cast upon them by my voice
Delivering her decisions from the seat
Of forward youth—that scruples not to solve
Doubts, and determine questions, by the rules
Of inexperienced judgment, ever prone
To overweening faith ; and is inflamed,
By courage, to demand from real life
The test of act and suffering, to provoke
Hostility—how dreadful when it comes,
Whether affliction be the foe, or guilt !

A child of earth, I rested, in that stage
Of my past course to which these thoughts advert,
Upon earth's native energies ; forgetting
That mine was a condition which required
Nor energy, nor fortitude—a calm
Without vicissitude ; which, if the like
Had been presented to my view elsewhere,
I might have even been tempted to despise.
But no—for the serene was also bright ;
Enlivened happiness with joy o'erflowing,
With joy, and—oh ! that memory should survive
To speak the word—with rapture ! Nature's boon,
Life's genuine inspiration, happiness
Above what rules can teach, or fancy feign ;
Abused, as all possessions *are* abused
That are not prized according to their worth.
And yet, what worth ? what good is given to men,
More solid than the gilded clouds of heaven ?
What joy more lasting than a vernal flower ?—
None ! 'tis the general plaint of human kind
In solitude : and mutually addressed
From each to all, for wisdom's sake :—This truth
The priest announces from his holy seat :
And, crowned with garlands in the summer grove,
The poet fits it to his pensive lyre.
Yet, ere that final resting-place be gained,
Sharp contradictions may arise, by doom
Of this same life, compelling us to grieve
That the prosperities of love and joy
Should be permitted, oft-times, to endure
So long, and be at once cast down for ever.
Oh ! tremble, ye, to whom hath been assigned
A course of days composing happy months,

And they as happy years ; the present still
So like the past, and both so firm a pledge
Of a congenial future, that the wheels
Of pleasure move without the aid of hope :
For Mutability is Nature's bane :
And slighted Hope *will* be avenged ; and, when
Ye need her favors, ye shall find her not ;
But in her stead—fear—doubt—and agony !”

This was the bitter language of the heart :
But, while he spake, look, gesture, tone of voice,
Though discomposed and vehement, were such
As skill and graceful nature might suggest
To a proficient of the tragic scene
Standing before the multitude, beset
With dark events. Desirous to divert
Or stem the current of the speaker's thoughts,
We signified a wish to leave that place
Of stillness and close privacy, a nook
That seemed for self-examination made ;
Or, for confession, in the sinner's need,
Hidden from all men's view. To our attempt
He yielded not ; but, pointing to a slope
Of mossy turf defended from the sun,
And on that couch inviting us to rest,
Full on that tender-hearted Man he turned
A serious eye, and his speech thus renewed.

“ You never saw, your eyes did never look
On the bright form of Her whom once I loved :
Her silver voice was heard upon the earth,
A sound unknown to you ; else, honored Friend !
Your heart had born a pitiable share

Of what I suffered, when I wept that loss,
And suffer now, not seldom, from the thought
That I remember, and can weep no more.—
Stripped as I am of all the golden fruit
Of self-esteem ; and by the cutting blasts
Of self-reproach familiarly assailed ;
Yet would I not be of such wintry barenness
But that some leaf of your regard should hang
Upon my naked branches ;—lively thoughts
Give birth, full often, to unguarded words ;
I grieve that, in your presence, from my tongue
Too much of frailty hath already dropped ;
But that too much demands still more.

You know,

Revered Compatriot—and to you, kind Sir,
(Not to be deemed a stranger, as you come
Following the guidance of these welcome feet
To our secluded vale) it may be told—
That my demerits did not sue in vain
To One on whose mild radiance many gazed
With hope, and all with pleasure. This fair Bride—
In the devotedness of youthful love,
Preferring me to parents, and the choir
Of gay companions, to the natal roof,
And all known places and familiar sights
(Resigned with sadness gently weighing down
Her trembling expectations, but no more
Than did to her due honor, and to me
Yielded, that day, a confidence sublime
In what I had to build upon)—this Bride,
Young, modest, meek, and beautiful, I led
To a low cottage in a sunny bay,
Where the salt sea innocuously breaks,

And the sea breeze as innocently breathes,
On Devon's leafy shores;—a sheltered hold,
In a soft clime encouraging the soil
To a luxuriant bounty!—As our steps
Approach the embowered abode—our chosen seat—
See, rooted in the earth, her kindly bed,
The unendangered myrtle, decked with flowers,
Before the threshold stands to welcome us!
While, in the flowering myrtle's neighborhood,
Not overlooked but courting no regard,
Those native plants, the holly and the yew,
Gave modest intimation to the mind
How willingly their aid they would unite
With the green myrtle, to endear the hours
Of winter, and protect that pleasant place.
—Wild were the walks upon those lonely Downs,
Track leading into track; how marked, how worn
Into bright verdure, between fern and gorse,
Winding away its never-ending line
On their smooth surface, evidence was none:
But, there, lay open to our daily haunt,
A range of unappropriated earth,
Where youth's ambitious feet might move at large;
Whence, unmolested wanderers, we beheld
The shining giver of the day diffuse
His brightness o'er a tract of sea and land
Gay as our spirits, free as our desires!
As our enjoyments, boundless.—From those heights
We dropped, at pleasure, into sylvan combs;
Where arbors of impenetrable shade,
And mossy seats, detained us side by side,
With hearts at ease, and knowledge in our hearts
‘That all the grove and all the day was ours.’

O happy time! still happier was at hand;
For Nature called my Partner to resign
Her share in the pure freedom of that life,
Enjoyed by us in common.—To my hope,
To my heart's wish, my tender Mate became
The thankful captive of maternal bonds;
And those wild paths were left to me alone.
There could I meditate on follies past;
And, like a weary voyager escaped
From risk and hardship, inwardly retracing
A course of vain delights and thoughtless guilt,
And self-indulgence—without shame pursued.
There, undisturbed, could think of and could thank
Her whose submissive spirit was to me
Rule and restraint—my guardian—shall I say
That earthly Providence, whose guiding love
Within a port of rest had lodged me safe;
Safe from temptation, and from danger far?
Strains followed of acknowledgment addressed
To an Authority enthroned above
The reach of sight; from whom, as from their source,
Proceed all visible ministers of good
That walk the earth—Father of heaven and earth,
Father, and king, and judge, adored and feared!
These acts of mind, and memory, and heart,
And spirit—interrupted and relieved
By observations transient as the glance
Of flying sunbeams, or to the outward form
Cleaving with power inherent and intense,
As the mute insect fixed upon the plant
On whose soft leaves it hangs, and from whose cup
It draws its nourishment imperceptibly—

Endeared my wanderings ; and the mother's kiss
And infant's smile awaited my return.

In privacy we dwelt, a wedded pair,
Companions daily, often all day long ;
Not placed by fortune within easy reach
Of various intercourse, nor wishing aught
Beyond the allowance of our own fire-side,
The twain within our happy cottage born,
Inmates, and heirs of our united love ;
Graced mutually by difference of sex,
And with no wider interval of time
Between their several births than served for one
To establish something of a leader's sway ;
Yet left them joined by sympathy in age ;
Equals in pleasure, fellows in pursuit.
On these two pillars rested as in air
Our solitude,

It soothes me to perceive,
Your courtesy withholds not from my words
Attentive audience. But, oh ! gentle Friends,
As times of quiet and unbroken peace,
Though, for a nation, times of blessedness,
Give back faint echoes from the historian's page ;
So, in the imperfect sounds of this discourse,
Depressed I hear, how faithless is the voice
Which those most blissful days reverberate.
What special record can, or need, be given
To rules and habits, whereby much was done,
But all within the sphere of little things ;
Of humble, though, to us, important cares,
And precious interests ? Smoothly did our life
Advance, swerving not from the path prescribed :

Her annual, her diurnal, round alike
Maintained with faithful care. And you divine
The worst effects that our condition saw
If you imagine changes slowly wrought,
And in their progress unperceivable ;
Not wished for ; sometimes noticed with a sigh,
(Whate'er of good or lovely they might bring)
Sighs of regret, for the familiar good
And loveliness endeared which they removed.

Seven years of occupation undisturbed
Established seemingly a right to hold
That happiness ; and use and habit gave
To what an alien spirit had acquired
A patrimonial sanctity. And thus,
With thoughts and wishes bounded to this world,
I lived and breathed ; most grateful—if to enjoy
Without repining or desire for more,
For different lot, or change to higher sphere,
(Only except some impulses of pride
With no determined object, though upheld
By theories with suitable support)—
Most grateful, if in such wise to enjoy
Be proof of gratitude for what we have ;
Else, I allow, most thankless.—But, at once,
From some dark seat of fatal power was urged
A claim that shattered all.—Our blooming girl,
Caught in the gripe of death, with such brief time
To struggle in as scarcely would allow
Her cheek to change its color, was conveyed
From us to inaccessible worlds, to regions
Where height, or depth, admits not the approach
Of living man, though longing to pursue.

—With even as brief a warning—and how soon,
With what short interval of time between,
I tremble yet to think of—our last prop,
Our happy life's only remaining stay—
The brother followed ; and was seen no more !

Calm as a frozen lake when ruthless winds
Blow fiercely, agitating earth and sky, .
The Mother now remained ; as if in her,
Who, to the lowest region of the soul,
Had been erewhile unsettled and disturbed,
This second visitation had no power
To shake ; but only to bind up and seal ;
And to establish thankfulness of heart
In Heaven's determinations, ever just.
The eminence whereon her spirit stood,
Mine was unable to attain. Immense
The space that severed us ! But, as the sight
Communicates with heaven's ethereal orbs
Incalculably distant ; so, I felt
That consolation may descend from far
(And that is intercourse, and union, too,)
While, overcome with speechless gratitude,
And, with a holier love inspired, I looked
On her—at once superior to my woes
And partner of my loss.—O heavy change !
Dimness o'er this clear luminary crept
Insensibly ;—the immortal and divine
Yielded to mortal reflux ; her pure glory,
As from the pinnacle of worldly state
Wretched ambition drops astounded, fell
Into a gulf obscure of silent grief,
And keen heart-anguish—of itself ashamed,

Yet obstinately cherishing itself :
And, so consumed, she melted from my arms ;
And left me, on this earth, disconsolate !

What followed cannot be reviewed in thought ;
Much less, retraced in words. If she, of life
Blameless, so intimate with love and joy
And all the tender motions of the soul,
Had been supplanted, could I hope to stand—
Infirm, dependent, and now destitute ?
I called on dreams and visions, to disclose
That which is veiled from waking thought ; conjured
Eternity, as men constrain a ghost
To appear and answer ; to the grave I spake
Imploringly ;—looked up, and asked the Heavens
If Angels traversed their cerulean floors,
If fixed or wandering star could tidings yield
Of the departed spirit—what abode
It occupies—what consciousness retains
Of former loves and interests. Then my soul
Turned inward,—to examine of what stuff
Time's fetters are composed ; and life was put
To inquisition, long and profitless !
By pain of heart—now checked—and now impelled—
The intellectual power, through words and things,
Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way !
And from those transports, and these toils abstruse,
Some trace am I enabled to retain
Of time, else lost ;—existing unto me
Only by records in myself not found.

From that abstraction I was roused,—and how ?
Even as a thoughtful shepherd by a flash

Of lightning startled in a gloomy cave
Of these wild hills. For, lo ! the dread Bastile,
With all the chambers in its horrid towers,
Fell to the ground :—by violence overthrown
Of indignation ; and with shouts that drowned
The crash it made in falling ! From the wreck
A golden palace rose, or seemed to rise,
The appointed seat of equitable law
And mild paternal sway. The potent shock
I felt : the transformation I perceived,
As marvellously seized as in that moment
When, from the blind mist issuing, I beheld
Glory—beyond all glory ever seen,
Confusion infinite of heaven and earth,
Dazzling the soul. Meanwhile, prophetic harps
In every grove were ringing, ‘ War shall cease ;
‘ Did ye not hear that conquest is abjured ?
‘ Bring garlands, bring forth choicest flowers, to deck
‘ The tree of Liberty.’—My heart rebounded ;
My melancholy voice the chorus joined ;
—‘ Be joyful all ye nations ; in all lands,
‘ Ye that are capable of joy be glad !
‘ Henceforth, whate’er is wanting to yourselves
‘ In others ye shall promptly find ;—and all,
‘ Enriched by mutual and reflected wealth,
‘ Shall with one heart honor their common kind.’

Thus was I reconverted to the world ;
Society became my glittering bride,
And airy hopes my children.—From the depths
Of natural passion, seemingly escaped,
My soul diffused herself in wide embrace
Of institutions, and the forms of things;

As they exist, in mutable array,
Upon life's surface. What, though in my veins
There flowed no Gallic blood, nor had I breathed
The air of France, not less than Gallic zeal
Kindled and burnt among the sapless twigs
Of my exhausted heart. If busy men
In sober conclave met, to weave a web
Of amity, whose living threads should stretch
Beyond the seas, and to the farthest pole,
There did I sit, assisting. If, with noise
And acclamation, crowds in open air
Expressed the tumult of their minds, my voice
There mingled, heard or not. The powers of song
I left not uninvoked ; and, in still groves
Where mild enthusiasts tuned a pensive lay
Of thanks and expectation, in accord
With their belief, I sang Saturnian rule
Returned,—a progeny of golden years
Permitted to descend, and bless mankind.
—With promises the Hebrew Scriptures teem :
I felt their invitation ; and resumed
A long-suspended office in the House
Of public worship, where, the glowing phrase
Of ancient inspiration serving me,
I promised also,—with undaunted trust
Foretold, and added prayer to prophecy ;
The admiration winning of the crowd ;
The help desiring of the pure devout.

Scorn and contempt forbid me to proceed !
But History, time's slavish scribe, will tell
How rapidly the zealots of the cause
Disbanded—or in hostile ranks appeared ;

Some, tired of honest service; these, outdone,
Disgusted therefore, or appalled, by aims
Of fiercer zealots—so confusion reigned,
And the more faithful were compelled to exclaim,
As Brutus did to Virtue, ‘Liberty,
‘I worshipped thee, and find thee but a Shade!’

Such recantation had for me no charm,
Nor would I bend to it; who should have grieved
At aught, however fair, that bore the mien
Of a conclusion, or catastrophe.
Why then conceal, that, when the simply good
In timid selfishness withdrew, I sought
Other support, not scrupulous whence it came;
And, by what compromise it stood, not nice?
Enough if notions seemed to be high-pitched,
And qualities determined.—Among men
So charactered did I maintain a strife
Hopeless, and still more hopeless every hour;
But, in the process, I began to feel
That, if the emancipation of the world
Were missed, I should at least secure my own,
And be in part compensated. For rights,
Widely—inveterately usurped upon,
I spake with vehemence; and promptly seized
All that Abstraction furnished for my needs
Or purposes; nor scrupled to proclaim,
And propagate, by liberty of life,
Those new persuasions. Not that I rejoiced,
Or even found pleasure, in such vagrant course,
For its own sake; but farthest from the walk
Which I had trod in happiness and peace,
Was most inviting to a troubled mind;

That, in a struggling and distempered world,
Saw a seductive image of herself.
Yet, mark the contradictions of which Man
Is still the sport! Here Nature was my guide,
The Nature of the dissolute; but thee,
O fostering Nature! I rejected—smiled
At others' tears in pity; and in scorn
At those, which thy soft influence sometimes drew
From my unguarded heart.—The tranquil shores
Of Britain circumscribed me; else, perhaps
I might have been entangled among deeds,
Which, now, as infamous, I should abhor—
Despise, as senseless: for my spirit relished
Strangely the exasperation of that Land,
Which turned an angry beak against the down
Of her own breast: confounded into hope
Of disencumbering thus her fretful wings.

But all was quieted by iron bonds
Of military sway. The shifting aims,
The moral interests, the creative might
The varied functions and high attributes
Of civil action, yielded to a power
Formal, and odious, and contemptible.
—In Britain, ruled a panic dread of change;
The weak were praised, rewarded, and advanced;
And, from the impulse of a just disdain,
Once more did I retire into myself.
There feeling no contentment, I resolved
To fly, for safeguard, to some foreign shore,
Remote from Europe; from her blasted hopes;
Her fields of carnage, and polluted air,

Fresh blew the wind, when o'er the Atlantic Main
The ship went gliding with her thoughtless crew ;
And who among them but an Exile, freed
From discontent, indifferent, pleased to sit
Among the busily-employed, not more
With obligation charged, with service taxed,
Than the loose pendant—to the idle wind
Upon the tall mast streaming. But, ye Powers
Of soul and sense mysteriously allied,
O, never let the Wretched, if a choice
Be left him, trust the freight of his distress
To a long voyage on the silent deep !
For, like a plague, will memory break out ;
And, in the blank and solitude of things,
Upon his spirit, with a fever's strength,
Will conscience prey.—Feebly must they have felt
Who, in old time, attired with snakes and whips
The vengeful Furies. *Beautiful regards*
Were turned on me—the face of her I loved ;
The Wife and Mother pitifully fixing
Tender reproaches, insupportable !
Where now that boasted liberty ? No welcome
From unknown objects I received ; and those,
Known and familiar, which the vaulted sky
Did, in the placid clearness of the night,
Disclose, had accusations to prefer
Against my peace. Within the cabin stood
That volume—as a compass for the soul—
Revered among the nations. I implored
Its guidance ; but the infallible support
Of faith was wanting. Tell me, why refused
To One by storms annoyed and adverse winds ;
Perplexed with currents ; of his weakness sick ;

Of vain endeavors tired ; and by his own,
And by his nature's, ignorance, dismayed !

Long-wished-for sight, the Western World ap-peared !

And, when the ship was moored, I leaped ashore
Indignantly—resolved to be a man,
Who, having o'er the past no power, would live
No longer in subjection to the past,
With abject mind—from a tyrannic lord
Inviting penance, fruitlessly endured :
So, like a fugitive, whose feet have cleared
Some boundary, which his followers may not cross
In prosecution of their deadly chase,
Respiring I looked round.—How bright the sun,
The breeze how soft ! Can any thing produced
In the old World compare, thought I, for power
And majesty with this gigantic stream,
Sprung from the desert ? And behold a city
Fresh, youthful, and aspiring ! What are these
To me, or I to them ? As much at least
As he desires that they should be, whom winds
And waves have wafted to this distant shore,
In the condition of a damaged seed,
Whose fibres cannot, if they would, take root.
Here may I roam at large ;—my business is,
Roaming at large, to observe, and not to feel
And, therefore, not to act—convinced that all
Which bears the name of action, howso'er
Beginning, ends in servitude—still painful,
And mostly profitless. And, sooth to say,
On nearer view, a motley spectacle
Appeared, of high pretensions—unreproved

But by the obstreperous voice of higher still;
Big passions strutting on a petty stage;
Which a detached spectator may regard
Not unamused.—But ridicule demands
Quick change of objects; and, to laugh alone,
At a composing distance from the haunts
Of strife and folly, though it be a treat
As choice as musing Leisure can bestow;
Yet, in the very centre of the crowd,
To keep the secret of a poignant scorn,
Howe'er to airy Demons suitable,
Of all unsocial courses, is least fit
For the gross spirit of mankind,—the one
That soonest fails to please, and quickiest turns
Into vexation.

Let us, then, I said,
Leave this unknit Republic to the scourge
Of her own passions; and to regions haste,
Whose shades have never felt the encroaching axe,
Or soil endured a transfer in the mart
Of dire rapacity. There, Man abides,
Primeval Nature's child. A creature weak
In combination, (wherefore else driven back
So far, and of his old inheritance
So easily deprived?) but, for that cause,
More dignified, and stronger in himself;
Whether to act, judge, suffer, or enjoy.
True, the intelligence of social art
Hath overpowered his forefathers, and soon
Will sweep the remnant of his line away;
But contemplations, worthier, nobler far
Than her destructive energies, attend
His independence, when along the side

Of Mississippi, or that northern stream^{*}
That spreads into successive seas, he walks ;
Pleased to perceive his own unshackled life,
And his innate capacities of soul,
There imaged : or when, having gained the top
Of some commanding eminence, which yet
Intruder ne'er beheld, he thence surveys
Regions of wood and wide savannah, vast
Expanse of unappropriated earth,
With mind that sheds a light on what he sees ;
Free as the sun, and lonely as the sun,
Pouring above his head its radiance down
Upon a living and rejoicing world !

So, westward, tow'r'd the unviolated woods
I bent my way ; and, roaming far and wide,
Failed not to greet the merry Mocking-bird ;
And, while the melancholy Muccawiss
(The sportive bird's companion in the grove)
Repeated, o'er and o'er, his plaintive cry,
I sympathised at leisure with the sound ;
But that pure archetype of human greatness,
I found him not. There, in his stead, appeared
A creature, squalid, vengeful, and impure ;
Remorseless, and submissive to no law
But superstitious fear, and abject sloth.

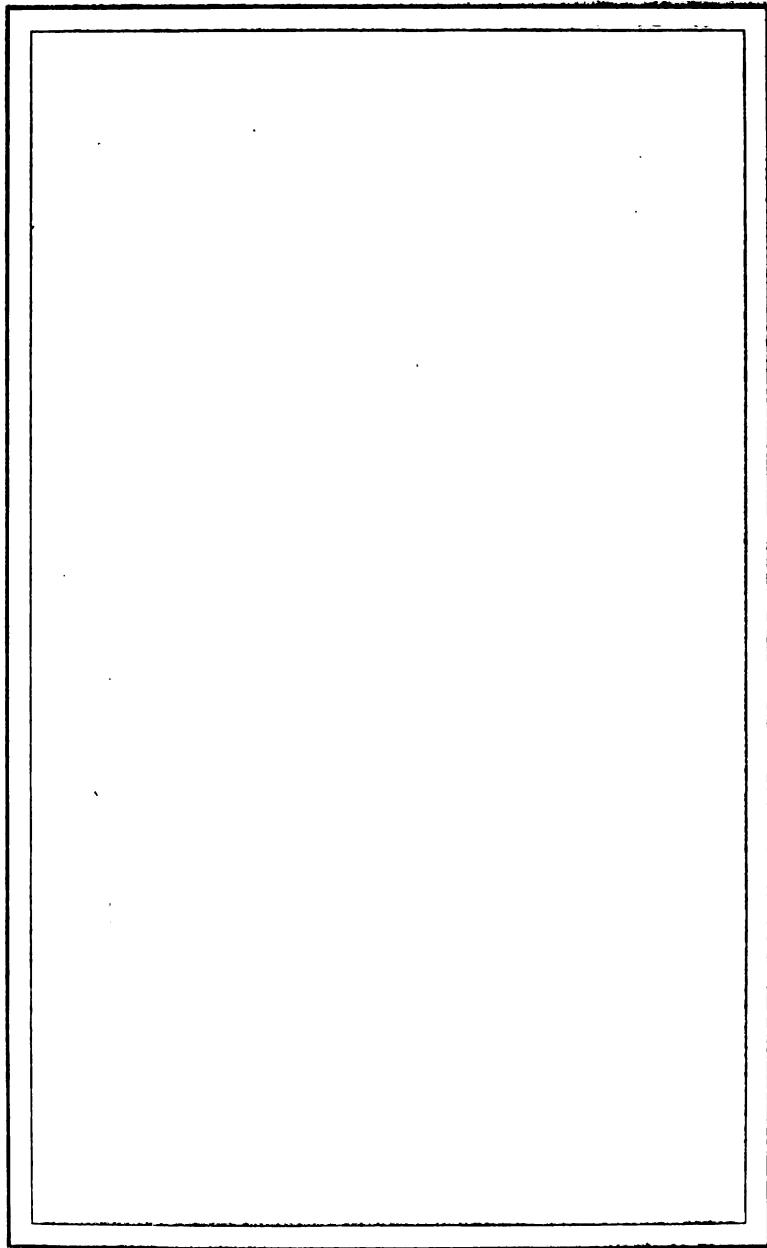
Enough is told ! Here am I—ye have heard
What evidence I seek, and vainly seek ;
What from my fellow-beings I require,
And either they have not to give, or I
Lack virtue to receive ; what I myself,
Too oft by wilful forfeiture, have lost

Nor can regain. How languidly I look
Upon this visible fabric of the world,
May be divined—perhaps it hath been said :—
But spare your pity, if there be in me
Aught that deserves respect : for I exist,
Within myself, not comfortless.—The tenor
Which my life holds, he readily may conceive
Whoe'er hath stood to watch a mountain brook
In some still passage of its course, and seen,
Within the depths of its capacious breast,
Inverted trees, rocks, clouds, and azure sky ;
And, on its glassy surface, specks of foam,
And conglobated bubbles undissolved,
Numerous as stars ; that, by their onward lapse,
Betray to sight the motion of the stream,
Else imperceptible. Meanwhile, is heard
A softened roar, or murmur ; and the sound
Though soothing, and the little floating isles
Though beautiful, are both by Nature charged
With the same pensive office ; and make known
Through what perplexing labyrinths, abrupt
Precipitations, and untoward straits,
The earth-born wanderer hath passed ; and quickly,
That respite o'er, like traverses and toils
Must he again encounter.—Such a stream
Is human Life ; and so the Spirit fares
In the best quiet to her course allowed ;
And such is mine,—save only for a hope
That my particular current soon will reach
The unfathomable gulf, where all is still !'

THE EXCURSION.

BOOK FOURTH.

DESPONDENCY CORRECTED.



DESPONDENCY CORRECTED.

ARGUMENT.

State of feeling produced by the foregoing Narrative.—A belief in a superintending Providence the only adequate support under affliction.—Wanderer acknowledges the difficulty of a lively faith.—Hence immoderate sorrow.—Exhortations.—How received.—Wanderer applies his discourse to that other cause of dejection in the Solitary's mind.—Disappointment from the French Revolution.—States grounds of hope, and insists on the necessity of patience and fortitude with respect to the course of great revolutions.—Knowledge the source of tranquillity—Rural Solitude favorable to knowledge of the inferior creatures; Study of their habits and ways recommended; exhortation to bodily exertion and communion with Nature.—Morbid Solitudo pitiable—Superstition better than apathy.—Apathy and destitution unknown in the infancy of society.—The various modes of Religion prevented it.—Wanderer points out the influence of religious and imaginative feeling in the humble ranks of society.—These principles tend to recall exploded superstitions and popery.—Wanderer rebuts this charge, and contrasts the dignities of the Imagination with the presumptuous littleness of certain modern Philosophers.—Recommends other lights and guides.—Asserts the power of the Soul to regenerate herself.—Exhortation to activity of body renewed.—How to commune with Nature.—Wanderer concludes with a legitimate union of the imagination, affections, understanding, and reason.—Effect of his discourse.—Evening: Return to the Cottage.

H_ERE closed the Tenant of that lonely vale
His mournful narrative—commenced in pain,
In pain commenced, and ended without peace:
Yet tempered, not unfrequently with strains
Of native feeling, grateful to our minds;
And yielding surely some relief to his,
While we sate listening with compassion due.
A pause of silence followed; then, with voice
That did not falter though the heart was moved
The Wanderer said:—

“ One adequate support
For the calamities of mortal life
Exists—one only ; an assured belief
That the procession of our fates, howe'er
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
Of infinite benevolence and power ;
Whose everlasting purposes embrace
All accidents, converting them to good.
—The darts of anguish *fix* not where the seat
Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified
By acquiescence in the Will supreme,
For time and for eternity ; by faith,
Faith absolute in God, including hope,
And the defence that lies in boundless love
Of his perfections ; with habitual dread
Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone,
To the dishonor of his holy name.
Soul of our Souls, and safeguard of the world !
Sustain, thou only canst, the sick of heart ;
Restore their languid spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto thee and thine !”

Then, as we issued from that covert nook,
He thus continued, lifting up his eyes
To heaven :—“ How beautiful this dome of sky ;
And the vast hills, in fluctuation fixed
At thy command, how awful ! Shall the Soul,
Human and rational, report of thee
Even less than these ?—Be mute who will, who can,
Yet I will praise thee with impassioned voice ;
My lips, that may forget thee in the crowd,
Cannot forget thee here ; where thou hast built,
For thy own glory, in the wilderness !

Me didst thou constitute a priest of thine,
 In such a temple as we now behold
 Reared for thy presence; therefore, am I bound
 To worship, here, and everywhere—as one
 Not doomed to ignorance, though forced to tread,
 From childhood up, the ways of poverty;
 From unreflecting ignorance preserved,
 And from debasement rescued.—By thy grace
 The particle divine remained unquenched;
 And, mid the wild weeds of a rugged soil,
 Thy bounty caused to flourish deathless flowers,
 From paradise transplanted: wintry age
 Impends; the frost will gather round my heart,
 If the flowers wither, I am worse than dead!
 —Come labor, when the worn out frame requires
 Perpetual Sabbath; come, disease and want;
 And sad exclusion through decay of sense;
 But leave me unabated trust in thee—
 And let thy favor, to the end of life,
 Inspire me with ability to seek
 Repose and hope among eternal things—
 Father of heaven and earth! and I am rich,
 And will possess my portion in content!

And what are things eternal!—powers depart,”
 The grey-haired Wanderer steadfastly replied,
 Answering the question which himself had asked.
 “ Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
 And passions hold a fluctuating seat;
 But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
 And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,
 Duty exists;—immutably survive,
 For our support, the measures and the forms,
 Which an abstract intelligence supplies;

Whose kingdom is, where time and space are not.
Of other converse which mind, soul, and heart,
Do with united urgency require,
What more that may not perish?—Thou, dread
source,
Prime, self-existing cause and end of all,
That in the scale of being fill their place;
Above our human region, or below,
Set and sustained;—thou, who didst wrap the cloud
Of infancy around us, that thyself,
Therein, with our simplicity awhile
Might'st hold on earth, communion undisturbed;
Who from the anarchy of dreaming sleep,
Or from its death-like void, with punctual care,
And touch as gentle as the morning light,
Restor'st us, daily, to the powers of sense
And reason's steadfast rule—thou, thou alone
Art everlasting, and the blessed Spirits,
Which thou includ'st, as the sea her waves:
For adoration thou endur'st; endure
For consciousness the motions of thy will;
For apprehension those transcendent truths
Of the pure intellect, that stand as laws
(Submission constituting strength and power)
Even to thy Being's infinite majesty!
This universe shall pass away—a work
Glorious! because the shadow of thy might,
A step, or link, for intercourse with thee.
Ah! if the time must come, in which my feet
No more shall stray where meditation leads,
By flowing stream, through wood, or craggy wild,
Loved haunts like these; the unimprisoned Mind
May yet have scope to range among her own,
Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.

If the dear faculty of sight should fail,
 Still, it may be allowed me to remember
 What visionary powers of eye and soul
 In youth were mine; when, stationed on the top
 Of some huge hill—expectant, I beheld
 The sun rise up, from distant climes returned
 Darkness to chase, and sleep; and bring the day
 His bounteous gift! or saw him toward the deep
 Sink, with a retinue of flaming clouds
 Attended: then, my spirit was entranced
 With joy exalted to beatitude;
 The measure of my soul was filled with bliss,
 And holiest love; as earth, sea, air, with light,
 With pomp, with glory, with magnificence!

Those fervent raptures are for ever flown;
 And, since their date, my soul hath undergone
 Change manifold, for better or for worse:
 Yet cease I not to struggle, and aspire
 Heavenward; and chide the part of me that flags,
 Through sinful choice; or dread necessity
 On human nature from above imposed.
 'T is, by comparison, an easy task
 Earth to despise; but, to converse with heaven—
 This is not easy:—to relinquish all
 We have, or hope, of happiness and joy,
 And stand in freedom loosened from this world,
 I deem not arduous; but must needs confess
 That 't is a thing impossible to frame
 Conceptions equal to the soul's desires;
 And the most difficult of tasks to *keep*
 Heights which the soul is competent to gain.
 —Man is of dust: ethereal hopes are his,
 Which, when they should sustain themselves aloft,

Want due consistence ; like a pillar of smoke,
That with majestic energy from earth
Rises ; but, having reached the thinner air,
Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen.
From this infirmity of mortal kind
Sorrow proceeds, which else were not ; at least,
If grief be something hallowed and ordained,
If, in proportion, it be just and meet,
Yet, through this weakness of the general heart,
Is it enabled to maintain its hold
In that excess which conscience disapproves.
For who could sink and settle to that point
Of selfishness ; so senseless who could be
As long and perseveringly to mourn
For any object of his love, removed
From this unstable world, if he could fix
A satisfying view upon that state
Of pure, imperishable blessedness,
Which reason promises, and holy writ
Ensures to all believers ?—Yet mistrust
Is of such incapacity, methinks,
No natural branch ; despondency far less ;
And least of all, is absolute despair.
—And, if there be whose tender frames have drooped
Even to the dust ; apparently, through weight
Of anguish unrelieved, and lack of power
An agonizing sorrow to transmute ;
Deem not that proof is here of hope withheld
When wanted most ; a confidence impaired
So pitifully, that, having ceased to see
With bodily eyes, they are borne down by love
Of what is lost, and perish through regret.
Oh ! no, the innocent Sufferer often sees
Too clearly ; feels too vividly ; and longs

To realize the vision, with intense
 And over-constant yearning ;—there—there lies
 The excess, by which the balance is destroyed.
 Too, too contracted, are these walls of flesh,
 This vital warmth too cold, these visual orbs,
 Though inconceivably endowed, too dim
 For any passion of the soul that leads
 To ecstasy ; and, all the crooked paths
 Of time and change disdaining, takes its course
 Along the line of limitless desires.

I, speaking now from such disorder free,
 Nor rapt, nor craving, but in settled peace,
 I cannot doubt that they whom you deplore
 Are glorified ; or, if they sleep, shall wake
 From sleep, and dwell with God in endless love.
 Hope, below this, consists not with belief
 In mercy, carried infinite degrees
 Beyond the tenderness of human hearts :
 Hope, below this, consists not with belief
 In perfect wisdom, guiding mightiest power
 That finds no limits but her own pure will.

Here then we rest ; not fearing for our creed
 The worst that human reasoning can achieve,
 To unsettle or perplex it ; yet with pain
 Acknowledging, and grievous self-reproach,
 That, though immovably convinced, we want
 Zeal, and the virtue to exist by faith
 As soldiers live by courage ; as, by strength
 Of heart, the sailor fights with roaring seas.
 Alas ! the endowment of immortal power
 Is matched unequally with custom, time,*
 And domineering faculties of sense
 In *all* ; in most with superadded foes,

Idle temptations; open vanities,
Ephemeral offspring of the unblushing world;
And, in the private regions of the mind,
Ill-governed passions, ranklings of despite,
Immoderate wishes, pining discontent,
Distress and care. What then remains?—To seek
Those helps for his occasions ever near
Who lacks not will to use them; vows, renewed
On the first motion of a holy thought;
Vigils of contemplation; praise; and prayer—
A stream, which, from the fountain of the heart
Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows
Without access of unexpected strength.
But, above all, the victory is most sure
For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of conscience—conscience reverenced and obeyed,
As God's most intimate presence in the soul,
And his most perfect image in the world.
—Endeavor thus to live; these rules regard;
These helps solicit; and a steadfast seat
Shall then be yours among the happy few
Who dwell on earth, yet breathe empyreal air,
Sons of the morning. For your nobler part,
Ere disengaged of her mortal chains
Doubt shall be quelled and trouble chased away;
With only such degree of sadness left
As may support longings of pure desire;
And strengthen love, rejoicing secretly
In the sublime attractions of the grave.”

While, in this strain, the venerable Sage
Poured forth his aspirations, and announced
His judgments, near that lonely house we paced

A plot of green-sward, seemingly preserved
 By nature's care from wreck of scattered stones,
 And from encroachment of encircling heath :
 Small space ! but, for reiterated steps,
 Smooth and commodious ; as a stately deck
 Which to and fro the mariner is used
 To tread for pastime, talking with his mates,
 Or haply thinking of far-distant friends,
 While the ship glides before a steady breeze.
 Stillness prevailed around us ! and the voice
 That spake was capable to lift the soul
 Toward regions yet more tranquil. But, methought,
 That he, whose fixed despondency had given
 Impulse and motive to that strong discourse,
 Was less upraised in spirit than abashed ;
 Shrinking from admonition, like a man
 Who feels that to exhort is to reproach.
 Yet not to be diverted from his aim,
 The Sage continued :

“ For that other loss,
 The loss of confidence in social man,
 By the unexpected transports of our age
 Carried so high, that every thought, which looked
 Beyond the temporal destiny of the Kind,
 To many seemed superfluous—as, no cause
 Could e'er for such exalted confidence
 Exist ; so, none is now for fixed despair :
 The two extremes are equally disowned
 By reason : if, with sharp recoil, from one
 You have been driven far as its opposite,
 Between them seek the point whereon to build
 Sound expectations. So doth he advise
 Who shared at first the illusion ; but was soon
 Cast from the pedestal of pride by shocks

Which Nature gently gave, in woods and fields ;
Nor unreproved by Providence, thus speaking
To the inattentive children of the world :
' Vain-glorious Generation ! what new powers
On you have been conferred ? what gifts, withheld
From your progenitors, have ye received,
Fit recompence of new desert ? what claim
Are ye prepared to urge, that my decrees
For you should undergo a sudden change ;
And the weak functions of one busy day,
Reclaiming and extirpating, perform
What all the slowly-moving years of time,
With their united force, have left undone ?
By nature's gradual processes be taught ;
By story be confounded ! Ye aspire
Rashly, to fall once more ; and that false fruit,
Which, to your over-weening spirits, yields
Hope of a flight celestial, will produce
Misery and shame. But Wisdom of her sons
Shall not the less, though late, be justified.'

Such timely warning," said the Wanderer, "gave
That visionary voice ; and, at this day,
When a Tartarean darkness overspreads
The groaning nations ; when the impious rule,
By will or by established ordinance,
Their own dire agents, and constrain the good
To acts which they abhor ; though I bewail
This triumph, yet the pity of my heart
Prevents me not from owning, that the law
By which mankind now suffers, is most just.
For by superior energies ; more strict
Affiance in each other ; faith more firm
In their unhallowed principles ; the bad

Have fairly earned a victory o'er the weak,
 The vacillating, inconsistent good.
 Therefore, not unconsoled, I wait—in hope
 To see the moment, when the righteous cause
 Shall gain defenders zealous and devout
 As they who have opposed her; in which Virtue
 Will, to her efforts, tolerate no bounds
 That are not lofty as her rights; aspiring
 By impulse of her own ethereal zeal.
 That spirit only can redeem mankind;
 And when that sacred spirit shall appear,
 Then shall *our* triumph be complete as theirs.
 Yet, should this confidence prove vain, the wise
 Have still the keeping of their proper peace;
 Are guardians of their own tranquillity.
 They act, or they recede, observe and feel;
 ‘Knowing the heart of man is set to be’
 The centre of this world, about the which
 Those revolutions of disturbances
 Still roll; where all the aspects of misery
 Predominate; whose strong effects are such
 As he must bear, being powerless to redress;
And that unless above himself he can
*Erect himself, how poor a thing is Man!**

Happy is he who lives to understand,
 Not human nature only, but explores
 All natures,—to the end that he may find
 The law that governs each; and where begins
 The union, the partition where, that makes
 Kind and degree, among all visible Beings;
 The constitutions, powers, and faculties,
 Which they inherit,—cannot step beyond,—
 And cannot fall beneath; that do assign

* Daniel.

To every class its station and its office,
Through all the mighty commonwealth of things ;
Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man.
Such converse, if directed by a meek,
Sincere, and humble spirit, teaches love :
For knowledge is delight ; and such delight
Breeds love : yet, suited as it rather is
To thought and to the climbing intellect,
It teaches less to love, than to adore ;
If that be not indeed the highest love !”

“ Yet,” said I, tempted here to interpose,
“ The dignity of life is not impaired
By aught that innocently satisfies
The humbler cravings of the heart ; and he
Is a still happier man, who, for those heights
Of speculation not unfit, descends ;
And such benign affections cultivates
Among the inferior kinds ; not merely those
That he may call his own, and which depend,
As individual objects of regard,
Upon his care, from whom he also looks
For signs and tokens of a mutual bond ;
But others, far beyond this narrow sphere,
Whom, for the very sake of love, he loves.
Nor is it a mean praise of rural life
And solitude, that they do favor most,
Most frequently call forth, and best sustain,
These pure sensations ; that can penetrate
The obstreperous city ; on the barren seas
Are not unfelt ; and much might recommend,
How much they might inspirit and endear,
The loneliness of this sublime retreat !”

"Yes," said the Sage, resuming the discourse
Again directed to his downcast Friend,
"If, with the froward will and grovelling soul
Of man, offended, liberty is here,
And invitation every hour renewed,
To mark *their* placid state, who never heard
Of a command which they have power to break,
Or rule which they are tempted to transgress:
These, with a soothed or elevated heart,
May we behold; their knowledge register;
Observe their ways; and, free from envy, find
Complacence there:—but wherefore this to you?
I guess that, welcome to your lonely hearth,
The redbreast, ruffled up by winter's cold
Into a 'feathery bunch,' feeds at your hand:
A box, perchance, is from your casement hung
For the small wren to build in:—not in vain,
The barriers disregarding that surround
This deep abiding place, before your sight
Mounts on the breeze the butterfly; and soars,
Small creature as she is, from earth's bright flowers
Into the dewy clouds. Ambition reigns
In the waste wilderness: the Soul ascends
Drawn towards her native firmament of heaven,
When the fresh eagle, in the month of May,
Upborne, at evening, on replenished wing,
This shaded valley leaves; and leaves the dark
Empurpled hills, conspicuously renewing
A proud communication with the sun
Low sunk beneath the horizon!—List!—I heard,
From yon huge breast of rock, a voice sent forth
As if the visible mountain made the cry.
Again!"—The effect upon the soul was such
As he expressed: from out the mountain's heart

The solemn voice appeared to issue, startling
The blank air—for the region all around
Stood empty of all shape of life, and silent
Save for that single cry, the unanswered bleat
Of a poor lamb—left somewhere to itself,
The plaintive spirit of the solitude !
He paused, as if unwilling to proceed,
Through consciousness that silence in such place
Was best, the most affecting eloquence.
But soon his thoughts returned upon themselves,
And, in soft tone of speech, thus he resumed.

“ Ah ! if the heart, too confidently raised,
Perchance too lightly occupied, or lulled
Too easily, despise or overlook
The vassalage that binds her to the earth,
Her sad dependence upon time, and all
The trepidations of mortality,
What place so destitute and void—but there
The little flower her vanity shall check ;
The trailing worm reprove her thoughtless pride ?

These craggy regions, these chaotic wilds,
Does that benignity pervade, that warms
The mole contented with her darksome walk
In the cold ground ; and to the emmet gives
Her foresight, and intelligence that makes
The tiny creatures strong by social league
Supports the generations, multiplies
Their tribes, till we behold a spacious plain
Or grassy bottom, all, with little hills—
Their labor, covered, as a lake with waves ;
Thousands of cities, in the desert place
Built up of life, and food, and means of life !

Nor wanting here to entertain the thought,
Creatures that in communities exist,
Less, as might seem, for general guardianship
Or through dependence upon mutual aid,
Than by participation of delight
And a strict love of fellowship, combined.
What other spirit can it be that prompts
The gilded summer flies to mix and weave
Their sports together in the solar beams,
Or in the gloom of twilight hum their joy ?
More obviously the self-same influence rules
The feathered kinds ; the fieldfare's pensive flock,
The cawing rooks, and sea-mews from afar,
Hovering above these inland solitudes,
By the rough wind unscattered, at whose call
Up through the trenches of the long-drawn vales
Their voyage was begun : nor is its power
Unfelt among the sedentary fowl
That seek yon pool, and there prolong their stay
In silent congress ; or together roused
Take flight ; while with their clang the air resounds.
And, over all, in that ethereal vault,
Is the mute company of changeful clouds ;
Bright apparition, suddenly put forth,
The rainbow smiling on the faded storm ;
The mild assemblage of the starry heavens ;
And the great sun, earth's universal lord !

How bountiful is Nature ! he shall find
Who seeks not ; and to him, who hath not asked,
Large measure shall be dealt. Three Sabbath-days
Are scarcely told, since, on a service bent,
Of mere humanity, you climb those heights ;
And what a marvellous and heavenly show

Was suddenly revealed!—the swains moved on
And heeded not: you lingered, you perceived
And felt, deeply as living man could feel.
There is a luxury in self-dispraise;
And inward self-disparagement affords
To meditative spleen a grateful feast.
Trust me, pronouncing on your own desert,
You judge unthankfully: distempered nerves
Infect the thoughts: the languor of the frame
Depresses the soul's vigor. Quit your couch—
Cleave not so fondly to your moody cell;
Nor let the hallowed powers, that shed from heaven
Stillness and rest, with disapproving eye
Look down upon your taper, through a watch
Of midnight hours, unseasonably twinkling
In this deep Hollow, like a sullen star
Dimly reflected in a lonely pool.
Take courage, and withdraw yourself from ways
That run not parallel to nature's course.
Rise with the lark! your matins shall obtain
Grace, be their composition what it may,
If but with hers performed; climb once again,
Climb every day, those ramparts; meet the breeze
Upon their tops, adventurous as a bee
That from your garden thither soars, to feed
On new-blown heath; let yon commanding rock
Be your frequented watch-tower; roll the stone
In thunder down the mountains; with all your
might
Chase the wild goat; and if the bold red deer
Fly to those harbors, driven by hound and horn
Loud echoing, add your speed to the pursuit;
So, wearied to your hut shall you return,
And sink at evening into sound repose."

The Solitary lifted toward the hills
A kindling eye :—accordant feelings rushed
Into my bosom, whence these words broke forth:
“ Oh ! what a joy it were, in vigorous health,
To have a body (this our vital frame
With shrinking sensibility endued,
And all the nice regards of flesh and blood)
And to the elements surrender it
As if it were a spirit !—How divine,
The liberty, for frail, for mortal man,
To roam at large among unpeopled glens
And mountainous retirements, only trod
By devious footsteps ; regions consecrate
To oldest time ! and, reckless of the storm
That keeps the raven quiet in her nest,
Be as a presence or a motion—one
Among the many there ; and while the mists
Flying, and rainy vapors, call out shapes
And phantoms from the crags and solid earth
As fast as a musician scatters sounds
Out of an instrument ; and while the streams
(As at a first creation and in haste
To exercise their untried faculties)
Descending from the region of the clouds,
And starting from the hollows of the earth
More multitudinous every moment, rend
Their way before them—what a joy to roam
An equal among mightiest energies ;
And haply sometimes with articulate voice,
Amid the deafening tumult, scarcely heard
By him that utters it, exclaim aloud,
‘ Rage on, ye elements ! let moon and stars
Their aspects lend, and mingle in their turn

With this commotion (ruinous though it be)
From day to night, from night to day, prolonged!"

"Yes," said the Wanderer, taking from my lips
The strain of transport, "whosoe'er in youth
Has, through ambition of his soul, given way
To such desires, and grasped at such delight,
Shall feel congenial stirrings late and long,
In spite of all the weakness that life brings,
Its cares and sorrows; he, though taught to own
The tranquillizing power of time, shall wake,
Wake sometimes to a noble restlessness—
Loving the sports which once he gloried in.

Compatriot, Friend, remote are Garry's hills,
The streams far distant of your native glen;
Yet is their form and image here expressed
With brotherly resemblance. Turn your steps
Wherever fancy leads; by day, by night,
Are various engines working, not the same
As those with which your soul in youth was moved,
But by the great Artificer endowed
With no inferior power. You dwell alone;
You walk, you live, you speculate alone;
Yet doth remembrance, like a sovereign prince,
For you a stately gallery maintain
Of gay or tragic pictures. You have seen,
Have acted, suffered, travelled far, observed
With no incurious eye; and books are yours,
Within whose silent chambers treasure lies
Preserved from age to age; more precious far
Than that accumulated store of gold
And orient gems, which, for a day of need,
The Sultan hides deep in ancestral tombs.

These hoards of truth you can unlock at will:
And music waits upon your skilful touch,
Sounds which the wandering shepherd from these
heights

Hears, and forgets his purpose;—furnished thus,
How can you droop, if willing to be upraised?

A piteous lot it were to flee from Man—
Yet not rejoice in Nature. He, whose hours
Are by domestic pleasures uncaressed
And unenlivened; who exists whole years
Apart from benefits received or done
'Mid the transactions of the bustling crowd;
Who neither hears, nor feels a wish to hear,
Of the world's interests—such a one hath need
Of a quick fancy, and an active heart,
That, for the day's consumption, books may yield
Food not unwholesome; earth and air correct
His morbid humor, with delight supplied
Or solace, varying as the seasons change.
—Truth has her pleasure-grounds, her haunts of
ease

And easy contemplation; gay parterres,
And labyrinthine walks, her sunny glades
And shady groves in studied contrast—each,
For recreation, leading into each:
These may he range, if willing to partake
Their soft indulgences, and in due time
May issue thence, recruited for the tasks
And course of service Truth requires from those
Who tend her altars, wait upon her throne,
And guard her fortresses. Who thinks, and feels,
And recognises ever and anon
The breeze of nature stirring in his soul,

Why need such man go desperately astray,
And nurse 'the dreadful appetite of death ?'
If tired with systems, each in its degree
Substantial, and all crumbling in their turn,
Let him build systems of his own, and smile
At the fond work, demolished with a touch ;
If unreligious, let him be at once
Among ten thousand innocents, enrolled
A pupil in the many-chambered school,
Where superstition weaves her airy dreams.

Life's autumn past, I stand on winter's verge ;
And daily lose what I desire to keep :
Yet rather would I instantly decline
To the traditional sympathies
Of a most rustic ignorance, and take
A fearful apprehension from the owl
Or death-watch : and as readily rejoice,
If two auspicious magpies crossed my way ;—
To this would rather bend than see and hear
The repetitions wearisome of sense,
Where soul is dead and feeling hath no place ;
Where knowledge, ill begun in cold remark
On outward things, with formal inference ends ;
Or, if the mind turn inward, she recoils
At once—or, not recoiling, is perplexed—
Lost in a gloom of uninspired research ;
Meanwhile, the heart within the heart, the seat
Where peace and happy consciousness should dwell,
On its own axis restlessly revolving,
Seeks, yet can nowhere find, the light of truth.

Upon the breast of new-created earth
Man walked ; and when and wheresoe'er he moved,

Alone or mated, solitude was not.
 He heard, borne on the wind, the articulate voice
 Of God ; and Angels to his sight appeared
 Crowning the glorious hills of paradise ;
 Or through the groves gliding like morning mist
 Enkindled by the sun. He sate—and talked
 With winged Messengers ; who daily brought
 To his small island in the ethereal deep
 Tidings of joy and love.—From those pure heights
 (Whether of actual vision, sensible
 To sight and feeling, or that in this sort
 Have condescendingly been shadowed forth
 Communications spiritually maintained,
 And intuitions moral and divine)
 Fell Human-kind—to banishment condemned
 That flowing years repealed not : and distress
 And grief spread wide ; but Man escaped the doom
 Of destitution ;—solitude was not.
 —Jehovah—shapeless Power above all Powers,
 Single and one, the omnipresent God,
 By vocal utterance, or blaze of light,
 Or cloud of darkness, localized in heaven ;
 On earth, enshrined within the wandering ark ;
 Or, out of Sion, thundering from his throne
 Between the Cherubim—on the chosen Race
 Showered miracles, and ceased not to dispense
 Judgments, that filled the land from age to age
 With hope, and love, and gratitude, and fear ;
 And with amazement smote ;—thereby to assert
 His scorn, or unacknowledged sovereignty.
 And when the One, ineffable of name,
 Of nature indivisible, withdrew
 From mortal adoration or regard,
 Not then was Deity engulfed ; nor Man,

The rational creature, left, to feel the weight
Of his own reason, without sense or thought
Of higher reason and a purer will,
To benefit and bless, through mightier power :—
Whether the Persian—zealous to reject
Altar and image, and the inclusive walls
And roofs of temples built by human hands—
To loftiest heights ascending, from their tops,
With myrtle-wreathed tiara on his brow,
Presented sacrifice to moon and stars,
And to the winds and mother elements,
And the whole circle of the heavens, for him
A sensitive existence, and a God,
With lifted hands invoked, and songs of praise :
Or, less reluctantly to bonds of sense
Yielding his soul, the Babylonian framed
For influence undefined a personal shape ;
And, from the plain, with toil immense, upreared
Tower eight times planted on the top of tower,
That Belus, nightly to his splendid couch
Descending, there might rest ; upon that height
Pure and serene, diffused—to overlook
Winding Euphrates, and the city vast
Of his devoted worshippers, far-stretched,
With grove and field and garden interspersed ;
Their town, and foodful region for support
Against the pressure of beleaguering war.

Chaldean Shepherds, ranging trackless fields,
Beneath the concave of unclouded skies
Spread like a sea, in boundless solitude,
Looked on the polar star, as on a guide
And guardian of their course, that never closed
His steadfast eye. The planetary Five

With a submissive reverence they beheld ;
Watched, from the centre of their sleeping flocks,
Those radiant Mercuries, that seemed to move
Carrying through ether, in perpetual round,
Decrees and resolutions of the Gods ;
And, by their aspects, signifying works
Of dim futurity, to Man revealed.
—The imaginative faculty was lord
Of observations natural ; and, thus
Led on, those shepherds made report of stars
In set rotation passing to and fro,
Between the orbs of our apparent sphere
And its invisible counterpart, adorned
With answering constellations, under earth,
Removed from all approach of living sight
But present to the dead ; who, so they deemed,
Like those celestial messengers beheld
All accidents, and judges were of all.

The lively Grecian, in a land of hills,
Rivers and fertile plains, and sounding shores,—
Under a cope of sky more variable,
Could find commodious place for every God,
Promptly received, as prodigally brought,
From the surrounding countries, at the choice
Of all adventurers. With unrivalled skill,
As nicest observation furnished hints
For studious fancy, his quick hand bestowed
On fluent operations a fixed shape ;
Metal or stone, idolatrously served.
And yet—triumphant o'er this pompous show
Of art, this palpable array of sense,
On every side encountered ; in despite
Of the gross fictions chanted in the streets

By wandering Rhapsodists ; and in contempt
Of doubt and bold denial hourly urged
Amid the wrangling schools—a SPIRIT hung,
Beautiful region ! o'er thy towns and farms,
Statues and temples, and memorial tombs ;
And emanations were perceived ; and acts
Of immortality, in Nature's course,
Exemplified by mysteries, that were felt
As bonds, on grave philosopher imposed
And armed warrior ; and in every grove
A gay or pensive tenderness prevailed,
When piety more awful had relaxed.
—‘Take, running river, take these locks of mine’—
Thus would the Votary say—‘this severed hair,
My vow fulfilling, do I here present,
Thankful for my beloved child’s return.
Thy banks, Cephisus, he again hath trod,
Thy murmurs heard ; and drunk the crystal lymph
With which thou dost refresh the thirsty lip,
And, all day long, moisten these flowery fields !’
And doubtless, sometimes, when the hair was shed
Upon the flowing stream, a thought arose
Of Life continuous, Being unimpaired ;
That hath been, is, and where it was and is
There shall endure,—existence unexposed
To the blind walk of moral accident ;
From diminution safe and weakening age ;
While man grows old, and dwindleth, and decays ;
And countless generations of mankind
Depart ; and leave no vestige where they trod.

We live by Admiration, Hope, and Love ;
And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,
In dignity of being we ascend.

But what is error?"—" Answer he who can!"
The Sceptic somewhat haughtily exclaimed :
" Love, Hope, and Admiration—are they not
Mad Fancy's favorite vassals ? Does not life
Use them, full oft, as pioneers to ruin,
Guides to destruction ? Is it well to trust
Imagination's light when reason fails,
The unguarded taper where the guarded faints ?
—Stoop from those heights, and soberly declare
What error is : and, of our errors, which
Doth most debase the mind ; the genuine seats
Of power, where are they ? Who shall regulate,
With truth, the scale of intellectual rank !"

" Methinks," persuasively the Sage replied,
" That for this arduous office you possess
Some rare advantages. Your early days
A grateful recollection must supply
Of much exalted good by Heaven vouchsafed
To dignify the humblest state.—Your voice
Hath, in my hearing, often testified
That poor men's children, they, and they alone,
By their condition taught, can understand
The wisdom of the prayer that daily asks
For daily bread. A consciousness is yours
How feelingly religion may be learned
In smoky cabins, from a mother's tongue—
Heard, while the dwelling vibrates to the din
Of the contiguous torrent, gathering strength
At every moment—and, with strength, increase
Of fury ; or, while snow is at the door,
Assaulting and defending, and the wind,
A sightless laborer, whistles at his work—
Fearful : but resignation tempers fear,

And piety is sweet to infant minds.
—The Shepherd-lad, that in the sunshine carves
On the green turf, a dial—to divide
The silent hours ; and who to that report
Can portion out his pleasures, and adapt,
Throughout a long and lonely summer's day
His round of pastoral duties is not left
With less intelligence for *moral* things
Of gravest import. Early he perceives,
Within himself, a measure and a rule,
Which, to the sun of truth he can apply,
That shines for him, and shines for all mankind.
Experience daily fixing his regards
On nature's wants, he knows how few they are,
And where they lie, how answered and appeased.
This knowledge ample recompense affords
For manifold privations ; he refers
His notions to this standard ; on this rock
Rests his desires ; and hence, in after life,
Soul-strengthening patience, and sublime content.
Imagination—not permitted here
To waste her powers, as in the worldling's mind,
On fickle pleasures, and superfluous cares,
And trivial ostentation—is left free
And puissant to range the solemn walks
Of time and nature, girded by a zone
That, while it binds, invigorates and supports.
Acknowledge, then, that whether by the side
Of his poor hut, or on the mountain top,
Or in the cultured field, a Man so bred
(Take what you will from him upon the score
Of ignorance or illusion) lives and breathes
For nobler purposes of mind : his heart
Beats to the heroic song of ancient days ;

His eye distinguishes, his soul creates.
 And those illusions, which excite the scorn
 Or move the pity of unthinking minds,
 Are they not mainly outward ministers
 Of inward conscience ? with whose service charged
 They come and go, appear and disappear,
 Diverting evil purposes, remorse
 Awakening, chastening an intemperate grief,
 Or pride of heart abating ; and whene'er
 For less important ends those phantoms move,
 Who would forbid them, if their presence serve,
 On thinly-peopled mountains and wild heaths,
 Filling a space, else vacant, to exalt
 The forms of Nature, and enlarge her powers ?

Once more to distant ages of the world
 Let us revert, and place before our thoughts
 The face which rural solitude might wear
 To the unenlightened swains of pagan Greece.
 —In that fair clime, the lonely herdsman, stretched
 On the soft grass through half a summer's day,
 With music lulled his indolent repose :
 And, in some fit of weariness, if he
 When his own breath was silent, chanced to hear
 A distant strain, far sweeter than the sounds
 Which his poor skill could make, his fancy fetched,
 Even from the blazing chariot of the sun,
 A beardless Youth, who touched a golden lute,
 And filled the illuminated groves with ravishment.
 The nightly hunter, lifting a bright eye
 Up towards the crescent moon, with grateful heart
 Called on the lovely wanderer who bestowed
 That timely light, to share his joyous sport :
 And hence, a beaming Goddess with her Nymphs,

Across the lawn and through the darksome grove
Not unaccompanied with tuneful notes
By echo multiplied from rock or cave,
Swept in the storm of chase ; as moon and stars
Glance rapidly along the clouded heaven,
When winds are blowing strong. The traveller
slaked

His thirst from rill or gushing fount, and thanked
The Naiad. Sunbeams, upon distant hills
Gliding apace, with shadows in their train,
Might, with small help from fancy, be transformed
Into fleet Oreads, sporting visibly.
The Zephyrs fanning, as they passed, their wings,
Lacked not, for love, fair objects whom they wooed
With gentle whisper. Withered boughs grotesque,
Stripped of their leaves and twigs by hoary age,
From depth of shaggy covert peeping forth
In the low vale, or on steep mountain-side ;
And, sometimes, intermixed with stirring horns
Of the live deer, or goat's depending beard,—
These were the lurking Satyrs, a wild brood
Of gamesome Deities ; or Pan himself,
The simple shepherd's awe-inspiring God !"

The strain was aptly chosen : and I could mark
Its kindly influence o'er the yielding brow
Of our Companion, gradually diffused ;
While, listening, he had paced the noiseless turf,
Like one whose untired ear a murmuring stream
Detains ; but tempted now to interpose,
He with a smile exclaimed :—

" 'T is well you speak
At a safe distance from our native land,
And from the mansions where our youth was taught.

The true descendants of those godly men
 Who swept from Scotland, in a flame of zeal,
 Shrine, altar, image, and the massy piles
 That harbored them,—the souls retuming yet
 The churlish features of that after-race
 Who fled to woods, caverns, and jutting rocks,
 In deadly scorn of superstitious rites,
 Or what their scruples construed to be such—
 How, think you, would they tolerate this scheme
 Of fine propensities, that tends, if urged
 Far as it might be urged, to sow afresh
 The weeds of Romish phantasy, in vain
 Uprooted ; would re-consecrate our wells
 To good Saint Fillan and to fair Saint Anne ;
 And from long banishment recall Saint Giles,
 To watch again with tutelary love
 Or stately Edinborough throned on crags ?
 A blessed restoration, to behold
 The patron, on the shoulders of his priests,
 Once more parading through her crowded streets
 Now simply guarded by the sober powers
 Of science, and philosophy, and sense !”

This answer followed.—“ You have turned my thoughts

Upon our brave Progenitors, who rose
 Against idolatry with warlike mind,
 And shrunk from vain observances, to lurk
 In woods, and dwell under impending rocks
 Ill-sheltered, and oft wanting fire and food ;
 Why ?—for this very reason that they felt,
 And did acknowledge, wheresoe'er they moved,
 A spiritual presence, oft-times misconceived,
 But still a high dependence, a divine

Bounty and government, that filled their hearts
With joy, and gratitude, and fear, and love ;
And from their fervent lips drew hymns of praise,
That through the desert rang. Though favored less
Far less, than these, yet such, in their degree,
Were those bewildered Pagans of old time.
Beyond their own poor natures and above
They looked ; were humbly thankful for the good
Which the warm sun solicited, and earth
Bestowed ; were gladsome,—and their moral sense
They fortified with reverence for the Gods ;
And they had hopes that overstepped the Grave.

Now, shall our great Discoverers," he exclaimed,
Raising his voice triumphantly, " obtain
From sense and reason less than these obtained,
Though far misled ? Shall men for whom our age
Unbaffled powers of vision hath prepared,
To explore the world without and world within,
Be joyless as the blind ? Ambitious spirits—
Whom earth, at this late season, hath produced
To regulate the moving spheres, and weigh
The planets in the hollow of their hand ;
And they who rather dive than soar, whose pains
Have solved the elements, or analysed
The thinking principle—shall they in fact
Prove a degraded Race ! and what avails
Renown, if their presumption make them such ?
Oh ! there is laughter at their work in heaven !
Inquire of ancient Wisdom ; go, demand
Of mighty Nature, if 'twas ever meant
That we should pry far off yet be unraised ;
That we should pore, and dwindle as we pore,
Viewing all objects unremittingly

In disconnection dead and spiritless ;
And still dividing, and dividing still,
Break down all grandeur, still unsatisfied
With the perverse attempt, while littleness
May yet become more little ; waging thus
An impious warfare with the very life
Of our own souls !

And if indeed there be
An all-pervading Spirit, upon whom
Our dark foundations rest, could he design
That this magnificent effect of power,
The earth we tread, the sky that we behold
By day, and all the pomp which night reveals ;
That these—and that superior mystery
Our vital frame, so fearfully devised,
And the dread soul within it—should exist
Only to be examined, pondered, searched,
Probed, vexed, and criticised ?—Accuse me not
Of arrogance, unknown Wanderer as I am,
If, having walked with Nature threescore years,
And offered, far as frailty would allow,
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,
I now affirm of Nature, and of Truth,
Whom I have served, that their DIVINITY
Revolts, offended at the ways of men
Swayed by such motives, to such ends employed ;
Philosophers, who, though the human soul
Be of a thousand faculties composed,
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize
This soul, and the transcendent universe,
No more than as a mirror that reflects
To proud Self-love her own intelligence ;
That one, poor, finite object, in the abyss
Of infinite Being, twinkling restlessly !

Nor higher place can be assigned to him
And his compeers—the laughing Sage of France.—
Crowned was he, if my memory do not err,
With laurel planted upon hoary hairs,
In sign of conquest by his wit achieved
And benefits his wisdom had conferred ;
His stooping body tottered with wreaths of flowers
Opprest, far less becoming ornaments
Than Spring oft twines about a mouldering tree ;
Yet so it pleased a fond, a vain, old Man,
And a most frivolous people. Him I mean
Who penned, to ridicule confiding faith,
This sorry Legend ; which by chance we found
Piled in a nook, through malice, as might seem,
Among more innocent rubbish.”—Speaking thus,
With a brief notice when, and how, and where,
We had espied the book, he drew it forth ;
And courteously, as if the act removed,
At once, all traces from the good Man’s heart
Of unbenign aversion or contempt,
Restored to its owner. “ Gentle Friend,”
Herewith he grasped the Solitary’s hand,
“ You have known lights and guides better than
these.

Ah ! let not aught amiss within dispose
A noble mind to practise on herself,
And tempt opinion to support the wrongs
Of passion : whatsoe’er be felt or feared,
From higher judgment-seats make no appeal
To lower ; can you question that the soul
Inherits an allegiance, not by choice
To be cast off, upon an oath proposed
By each new upstart notion ? In the ports
Of levity no refuge can be found,

No shelter, for a spirit in distress.
 He, who by wilful disesteem of life
 And proud insensibility to hope,
 Affronts the eye of Solitude, shall learn
 That her mild nature can be terrible ;
 That neither she nor Silence lack the power
 To avenge their own insulted majesty.

O blest seclusion ! when the mind admits
 The law of duty ; and can therefore move
 Through each vicissitude of loss and gain,
 Linked in entire complacence with her choice ;
 When youth's presumptuousness is mellowed down,
 And manhood's vain anxiety dismissed ;
 When wisdom shows her seasonable fruit,
 Upon the boughs of sheltering leisure hung
 In sober plenty ; when the spirit stoops
 To drink with gratitude the crystal stream
 Of unreproved enjoyment ; and is pleased
 To muse, and be saluted by the air
 Of meek repentance, wafting wall-flower scents
 From out the crumbling ruins of fallen pride
 And chambers of transgression, now forlorn.
 O, calm contented days, and peaceful nights !
 Who, when such good can be obtained, would strive
 To reconcile his manhood to a couch
 Soft, as may seem, but, under that disguise,
 Stuffed with the thorny substance of the past
 For fixed annoyance ; and full oft beset
 With floating dreams, black and disconsolate,
 The vapory phantoms of futurity ?

Within the soul a faculty abides,
 That with interpositions, which would hide
 13*

And darken, so can deal that they become
Contingencies of pomp ; and serve to exalt
Her native brightness. As the ample moon,
In the deep stillness of a summer even
Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,
Burns, like an unconsuming fire of light,
In the green trees ; and, kindling on all sides
Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil
Into a substance glorious as her own,
Yea, with her own incorporated, by power
Capacious and serene. Like power abides
In man's celestial spirit ; virtue thus
Sets forth and magnifies herself ; thus feeds
A calm, a beautiful, and silent fire,
From the encumbrances of mortal life,
From error, disappointment—nay, from guilt ;
And sometimes, so relenting justice wills,
From palpable oppressions of despair."

The Solitary by these words was touched
With manifest emotion, and exclaimed :
" But how begin ? and whence ?—‘ The Mind is
free—
Resolve,’ the haughty Moralist would say,
‘ This single act is all that we demand,’
Alas ! such wisdom bids a creature fly
Whose very sorrow is, that time hath shorn
His natural wings !—To friendship let him turn
For succor ; but perhaps he sits alone
On stormy waters, tossed in a little boat
That holds but him, and can contain no more !
Religion tells of amity sublime
Which no condition can preclude ; of One
Who sees all suffering, comprehends all wants,

All weakness fathoms, can supply all needs :
But is that bounty absolute ?—His gifts,
Are they not still, in some degree, rewards
For acts of service ? Can his love extend
To hearts that own him not ? Will showers of grace,
When in the sky no promise may be seen,
Fall to refresh a parched and withered land ?
Or shall the groaning Spirit cast her load
At the Redeemer's feet ?"

In rueful tone,
With some impatience in his mien he spake :
Back to my mind rushed all that had been urged
To calm the Sufferer when his story closed ;
I looked for counsel as unbending now ;
But a discriminating sympathy
Stooped to this apt reply :—

" As men from men
Do, in the constitution of their souls,
Differ, by mystery not to be explained ;
And as we fall by various ways, and sink
One deeper than another, self-condemned,
Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame ;
So manifold and various are the ways
Of restoration, fashioned to the steps
Of all infirmity, and tending all
To the same point, attainable by all—
Peace in ourselves, and union with our God.
For you, assuredly, a hopeful road
Lies open : we have heard from you a voice
At every moment softened in its course
By tenderness of heart; have seen your eye,
Even like an altar lit by fire from heaven,
Kindle before us,—Your discourse this day,
That, like the fabled Lethe, wished to flow,

In creeping sadness, through oblivious shades
Of death and night, has caught at every turn
The colors of the sun. Access for you
Is yet preserved to principles of truth,
Which the Imaginative Will upholds
In seats of wisdom, not to be approached
By the inferior Faculty that moulds,
With her minute and speculative pains
Opinion, ever changing !

I have seen
A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract
Of inland ground, applying to his ear
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell ;
To which, in silence hushed, his very soul
Listened intensely ; and his countenance soon
Brightened with joy ; for from within were heard
Murmurings, whereby the monitor expressed
Mysterious union with its native sea.
Even such a shell the universe itself
Is to the ear of Faith ; and there are times,
I doubt not, when to you it doth impart
Authentic tiding of invisible things ;
Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power ;
And central peace, subsisting at the heart
Of endless agitation. Here you stand,
Adore and worship, when you know it not ;
Pious beyond the intention of your thought ;
Devout above the meaning of your will.
—Yes, you have feit, and may not cease to feel.
The estate of man would be indeed forlorn
If false conclusions of the reasoning power
Made the eye blind, and closed the passages
Through which the ear converses with the heart.
Has not the soul, the being of your life,

Received a shock of awful consciousness,
In some calm season, when these lofty rocks
At night's approach bring down the unclouded sky,
To rest upon their circumambient walls ;
A temple framing of dimensions vast,
And yet not too enormous for the sound
Of human anthems,—choral song, or burst
Sublime of instrumental harmony,
To glorify the Eternal ! What if these
Did never break the stillness that prevails
Here,—if the solemn nightingale be mute,
And the soft woodlark here did never chant
Her vespers,—Nature fails not to provide
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air
Sends inspirations from the shadowy heights,
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks ;
The little rills, and waters numberless,
Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes
With the loud streams : and often, at the hour
When issue forth the first pale stars, is heard,
Within the circuit of this fabric huge,
One voice—the solitary raven, flying
Athwart the concave of the dark blue dome,
Unseen, perchance above all power of sight—
An iron knell ! with echoes from afar
Faint—and still fainter—as the cry, with which
The wanderer accompanies her flight
Through the calm region, fades upon the ear
Diminishing by distance till it seemed
To expire ; yet from the abyss is caught again,
And yet again recovered !

But descending
From these imaginative heights, that yield
Far-stretching views into eternity,

Acknowledge that to Nature's humbler power
Your cherished sullenness is forced to bend
Even here, where her amenities are sown
With sparing hand. Then trust yourself abroad
To range her blooming bowers, and spacious fields,
Where on the labors of the happy throng
She smiles, including in her wide embrace
City, and town, and tower,—and sea with ships
Sprinkled ;—be our Companion while we track
Her rivers populous with gliding life ;
While, free as air, o'er printless sands we march,
Or pierce the gloom of her majestic woods ;
Roaming, or resting under grateful shade
In peace and meditative cheerfulness ;
Where living things, and things inanimate,
Do speak, at Heaven's command, to eye and ear,
And speak to social reason's inner sense,
With inarticulate language.

For, the Man—

Who, in this spirit, communes with the Forms
Of nature, who with understanding heart
Both knows and loves such objects as excite
No morbid passions, no disquietude,
No vengeance, and no hatred—needs must feel
The joy of that pure principle of love
So deeply, that, unsatisfied with aught
Less pure and exquisite, he cannot choose
But seek for objects of a kindred love
In fellow-natures and a kindred joy.
Accordingly he by degrees perceives
His feelings of aversion softened down;
A holy tenderness pervades his frame.
His sanity of reason not impaired,
Say rather, all his thoughts now flowing clear,

From a clear fountain flowing, he looks round
And seeks for good ; and finds the good he seeks :
Until abhorrence and contempt are things
He only knows by name ; and, if he hear,
From other mouths, the language which they speak,
He is compassionate ; and has no thought,
No feeling which can overcome his love.

And further ! by contemplating these Forms
In the relations which they bear to man,
He shall discern, how, through the various means
Which silently they yield, are multiplied
The spiritual presences of absent things.
Trust me, that for the instructed, time will come
When they shall meet no object but may teach
Some acceptable lesson to their minds
Of human suffering or of human joy.
So shall they learn, while all things speak of man,
Their duties from all forms ; and general laws,
And local accidents, shall tend alike
To rouse, to urge ; and, with the will, confer
The ability to spread the blessings wide
Of true philanthropy. The light of love
Not failing, perseverance from their steps
Departing not, for them shall be confirmed
The glorious habit by which sense is made
Subservient still to moral purposes,
Auxiliar to divine. That change shall clothe
The naked spirit, ceasing to deplore
The burthen of existence. Science then
Shall be a precious visitant ; and then,
And only then, be worthy of her name :
For then her heart shall kindle ; her dull eye,
Dull and inanimate, no more shall hang

Chained to its object in brute slavery ;
But taught with patient interest to watch
The processes of things, and serve the cause
Of order and distinctness, not for this
Shall it forget that its most noblest use,
Its most illustrious province, must be found
In furnishing clear guidance, a support
Not treacherous, to the mind's *excursive* power.
—So build we up the Being that we are ;
Thus deeply drinking-in the soul of things,
We shall be wise perforce ; and, while inspired
By choice, and conscious that the Will is free,
Shall move unswerving, even as if impelled
By strict necessity, along the path
Of order and of good. Whate'er we see,
Or feel, shall tend to quicken and refine ;
Shall fix, in calmer seats of moral strength,
Earthly desires ; and raise, to loftier heights
Of divine love, our intellectual soul."

Here closed the Sage that eloquent harangue.
Poured forth with fervor in continuous stream,
Such as, remote, 'mid savage wilderness
An Indian Chief discharges from his breast
Into the hearing of assembled tribes,
In open circle seated round, and hushed
As the unbreathing air, when not a leaf
Stirs in the mighty woods.—So did he speak :
The words he uttered shall not pass away
Dispersed, like music, that the wind takes up
By snatches, and lets fall, to be forgotten ;
No—they sank into me, the bounteous gift
Of one whom time and nature had made wise,
Gracing his doctrine with authority

Which hostile spirits silently allow;
 Of one accustomed to desires that feed
 On fruitage gathered from the tree of life;
 To hopes on knowledge and experience built;
 Of one in whom persuasion and belief
 Had ripened into faith, and faith become
 A passionate intuition; whence the Soul,
 Though bound to earth by ties of pity and love,
 From all injurious servitude was free.

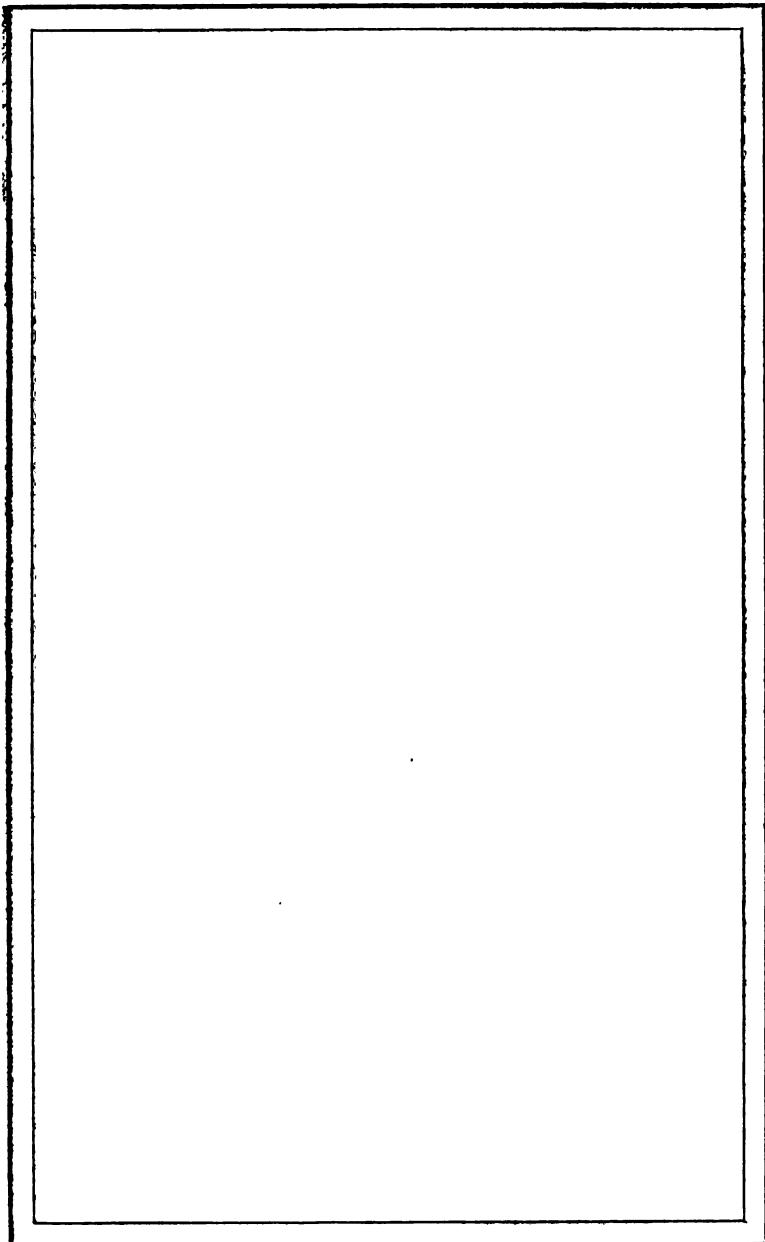
The Sun, before his place of rest were reached,
 Had yet to travel far, but unto us,
 To us who stood low in that hollow dell,
 He had become invisible,—a pomp
 Leaving behind of yellow radiance spread
 Over the mountain sides, in contrast bold
 With ample shadows, seemingly, no less
 Than those resplendent lights, his rich bequest;
 A dispensation of his evening power.
 —Adown the path that from the glen had led
 The funeral train, the Shepherd and his Mate
 Were seen descending :—forth to greet them ran
 Our little Page: the rustic pair approach;
 And in the Matron's countenance may be read
 Plain indication that the words, which told
 How that neglected Pensioner was sent
 Before his time into a quiet grave,
 Had done to her humanity no wrong:
 But we are kindly welcomed—promptly served
 With ostentatious zeal.—Along the floor
 Of the small Cottage in the lonely Dell
 A grateful couch was spread for our repose;
 Where, in the guise of mountaineers, we lay,
 Stretched upon fragrant heath, and lulled by sound

Of far-off torrents, charming the still night,
And, to tired limbs and over-busy thoughts,
Inviting sleep and soft forgetfulness.

THE EXCURSION.

BOOK FIFTH.

THE PASTOR.



THE PASTOR.

ARGUMENT.

Farewell to the Valley—Redections.—A large and populous vale described.—The Pastor's Dwelling, and some account of him.—Church and Monuments—The Solitary musing, and where.—Roused.—In the Churchyard the Solitary communicates the thoughts which had recently passed through his mind.—Lofty tone of the Wanderer's discourse of yesterday adverted to.—Rite of Baptism, and the professions accompanying it, contrasted with the real state of human life.—Apology for the Rite.—Inconsistency of the best men.—Acknowledgment that practice falls far below the injunctions of duty as existing in the mind.—General complaint of a falling off in the value of life after the time of youth.—Outward appearances of contest and happiness in degree illusive.—Pastor approaches.—Appeal made to him.—His answer.—Wanderer in sympathy with him.—Suggestion that the least ambitious inquirers may be most free from error.—The Pastor is desired to give some portraits of the living or dead from his own observation of life among these Mountains—and for what purpose.—Pastor consents.—Mountain cottage.—Excellent quality of its Inhabitants.—Solitary expresses his pleasure; but denies the praise of virtue to worth of this kind.—Feelings of the Priest before he enters upon his account of persons interred in the Churchyard.—Graves of unbaptized Infants.—Funeral and sepulchral observances, whence.—Ecclesiastical establishments, whence derived.—Profession of belief in the doctrine of Immortality.

“ FAREWELL, deep Valley, with thy one rude
House,
And its small lot of life-supporting fields,
And guardian rocks !—Farewell, attractive seat !
To the still influx of the morning light
Open, and day's pure cheerfulness, but veiled
From human observation, as if yet

Primeval forests wrapped thee round with dark
 Impenetrable shade ; once more farewell,
 Majestic circuit, beautiful abyss,
 By Nature destined from the birth of things
 For quietness profound !"

Upon the side
 Of that brown ridge, sole outlet of the vale
 Which foot of boldest stranger would attempt,
 Lingering behind my comrades, thus I breathed
 A parting tribute to a spot that seemed
 Like the fixed centre of a troubled world.
 Again I halted with reverted eyes ;
 The chain that would not slacken, was at length
 Snapt,—and, pursuing leisurely my way,
 How vain, thought I, is it by change of place
 To seek that comfort which the mind denies ;
 Yet trial and temptation oft are shunned
 Wisely ; and by such tenure do we hold,
 Frail life's possessions, that even they whose fate
 Yields no peculiar reason of complaint
 Might, by the promise that is here, be won
 To steal from active duties, and embrace
 Obscurity, and undisturbed repose.
 —Knowledge, methinks, in these disordered times,
 Should be allowed a privilege to have
 Her anchorites, like piety of old ;
 Men, who, from faction sacred, and unstained
 By war, might, if so minded, turn aside
 Uncensured, and subsist, a scattered few
 Living to God and nature, and content
 With that communion. Consecrated be
 The spots where such abide ! But happier still
 The Man, whom, furthermore, a hope attards

That meditation and research may guide
His privacy to principles and powers
Discovered or invented ; or set forth,
Through his acquaintance with the ways of truth,
In lucid order ; so that when his course
Is run, some faithful eulogist may say,
He sought not praise, and praise did overlook
His unobtrusive merit ; but his life,
Sweet to himself, was exercised in good
That shall survive his name and memory.

Acknowledgments of gratitude sincere
Accompanied these musings ; fervent thanks
For my own peaceful lot and happy choice ;
A choice that from the passions of the world
Withdrew, and fixed me in a still retreat ;
Sheltered, but not to social duties lost,
Secluded, but not buried ; and with song
Cheering my days, and with industrious thought ;
With the ever-welcome company of books ;
With virtuous friendship's soul-sustaining aid,
And with the blessings of domestic love.

Thus occupied in mind I paced along,
Following the rugged road, by sledge or wheel
Worn in the moorland, till I overtook
My two Associates, in the morning sunshine
Halting together on a rocky knoll,
Whence the bare road descended rapidly
To the green meadows of another vale.

Here did our pensive Host put forth his hand
In sign of farewell. " Nay," the old Man said,

"The fragrant air its coolness still retains ;
The herds and flocks are yet abroad to crop
The dewy grass ; you cannot leave us now,
We must not part at this inviting hour."

He yielded, though reluctant ; for his mind
Instinctively disposed him to retire
To his own covert ; as a billow, heaved
Upon the beach, rolls back into the sea.

—So we descend : and winding round a rock
Attain a point that showed the valley—stretched
In length before us ; and, not distant far,
Upon a rising ground a grey church-tower,
Whose battlements were screened by tufted trees.
And towards a crystal Mere, that lay beyond
Among steep hills and woods embosomed, flowed
A copious stream with boldly-winding course ;
Here traceable, there hidden—there again
To sight restored, and glittering in the sun.
On the stream's bank, and every where, appeared
Fair dwellings, single, or in social knots ;
Some scattered o'er the level, others perched
On the hill sides, a cheerful quiet scene,
Now in its morning purity arrayed.

"As mid some happy valley of the Alps,"
Said I, "once happy, ere tyrannic power,
Wantonly breaking in upon the Swiss,
Destroyed their unoffending commonwealth,
A popular equality reigns here,
Save for yon stately House beneath whose roof
A rural lord might dwell."—"No feudal pomp,
Or power," replied the Wanderer, "to that House

Belongs, but there in his allotted Home
Abides, from year to year, a genuine Priest,
The shepherd of his flock ; or, as a king
Is styled, when most affectionately praised,
The father of his people. Such is he ;
And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice
Under his spiritual sway. He hath vouchsafed
To me some portion of a kind regard ;
And something also of his inner mind
Hath he imparted—but I speak of him
As he is known to all.

The calm delights
Of unambitious piety he chose,
And learning's solid dignity ; though born
Of knightly race, nor wanting powerful friends.
Hither, in prime of manhood, he withdrew
From academic bowers. He loved the spot—
Who does not love his native soil ?—he prized
The ancient rural character, composed
Of simple manners, feelings unsupprest
And undisguised, and strong and serious thought ;
A character reflected in himself,
With such embellishments as well beseems
His rank and sacred function. This deep vale
Winds far in reaches hidden from our sight,
And one a turreted manorial hall
Adorns, in which the good Man's ancestors
Have dwelt through ages—Patrons of this Cure.
To them, and to his own judicious pains,
The Vicar's dwelling, and the whole domain,
Owes that presiding aspect which might well
Attract your notice ; statelier than could else

Have been bestowed, through course of common
chance,
On an unwealthy mountain Benefice."

This said, oft pausing, we pursued our way ;
Nor reached the village-churchyard till the sun
Travelling at steadier pace than ours, had risen
Above the summits of the highest hills,
And round our path darted oppressive beams.

As chanced, the portals of the sacred Pile
Stood open ; and we entered. On my frame,
At such transition from the fervid air,
A grateful coolness fell, that seemed to strike
The heart, in concert with that temperate awe
And natural reverence which the place inspired.
Not raised in nice proportions was the pile,
But large and massy ; for duration built ;
With pillars crowded, and the roof upheld
By naked rafters intricately crossed,
Like leafless underboughs, in some thick wood
All withered by the depth of shade above.
Admonitory texts inscribed the walls,
Each, in its ornamental scroll, enclosed ;
Each also crowned with winged heads—a pair
Of rudely-painted Cherubim. The floor
Of nave and aisle, in unpretending guise,
Was occupied by oaken benches ranged
In seemly rows ; the chancel only showed
Some vain distinctions, marks of earthly state
By immemorial privilege allowed ;
Though with the Encincture's special sanctity
But ill according. An heraldic shield,

Varying its tincture with the changeful light,
Imbued the altar-window ; fixed aloft
A faded hatchment hung, and one by time
Yet undiscolored. A capacious pew
Of sculptured oak stood here, with drapery lined ;
And marble monuments were here displayed
Thronging the walls ; and on the floor beneath
Sepulchral stones appeared, with emblems graven
And foot-worn epitaphs, and some with small
And shining effigies of brass inlaid.

The tribute by these various records claimed,
Duly we paid, each after each, and read
The ordinary chronicle of birth,
Office, alliance, and promotion—all
Ending in dust ; of upright magistrates,
Grave doctors strenuous for the mother-church,
And uncorrupted senators, alike
To king and people true. A brazen plate,
Not easily deciphered, told of one
Whose course of earthly honor was begun
In quality of page among the train
Of the eighth Henry, when he crossed the seas
His royal state to show, and prove his strength
In tournament, upon the fields of France.
Another tablet registered the death,
And praised the gallant bearing, of a Knight
Tried in the sea-fights of the second Charles.
Near this brave Knight his Father lay entombed ;
And, to the silent language giving voice,
I read,—how in his manhood's earlier day
He, mid the afflictions of intestine war
And rightful government subverted, found

One only solace—that he had espoused
A virtuous Lady tenderly beloved
For her benign perfections ; and yet more
Endeared to him, for this, that, in her state
Of wedlock richly crowned with Heaven's regard,
She with a numerous issue filled his house,
Who throve, like plants, uninjured by the storm
That laid their country waste. No need to speak
Of less particular notices assigned
To Youth or Maiden gone before their time,
And Matrons and unwedded Sisters old ;
Whose charity and goodness were rehearsed
In modest panegyric.

“ These dim lines,
What would they tell ? ” said I,—but, from the task
Of puzzling out that faded narrative,
With whisper soft my venerable Friend
Called me ; and, looking down the darksome aisle,
I saw the Tenant of the lonely vale
Standing apart ; with curv'd arm reclined
On the baptismal font ; his pallid face
Upturned, as if his mind were rapt, or lost
In some abstraction ;—gracefully he stood,
The semblance bearing of a sculptured form
That leans upon a monumental urn
In peace, from morn to night, from year to year.

Him from that posture did the Sexton rouse
Who entered, humming carelessly a tune,
Continuation haply of the notes
That had beguiled the work from which he came,
With spade and mattock o'er his shoulder hung ;
To be deposited, for future need,

In their appointed place. The pale Recluse
Withdrew; and straight we followed,—to a spot
Where sun and shade were intermixed; for there
A broad oak, stretching forth its leafy arms
From an adjoining pasture, overhung
Small space of that green churchyard with a light
And pleasant awning. On the moss-grown wall
My ancient Friend and I together took
Our seats; and thus the Solitary spake,
Standing before us:—

“ Did you note the mien
Of that self-solaced, easy-hearted churl,
Death’s hireling, who scoops out his neighbor’s grave,
Or wraps an old acquaintance up in clay,
All unconcerned as he would bind a sheaf,
Or plant a tree. And did you hear his voice?
I was abruptly summoned by the sound
From some affecting images and thoughts,
Which then were silent; but crave utterance now.

Much,” he continued, with dejected look,
“ Much, yesterday, was said in glowing phrase
Of our sublime dependencies, and hopes
For future states of being; and the wings
Of speculation, joyfully outspread,
Hovered above our destiny on earth:
But stop, and place the prospect of the soul
In sober contrast with reality,
And man’s substantial life. If this mute earth
Of what it holds could speak, and every grave
Were as a volume, shut, yet capable
Of yielding its contents to eye and ear,
We should recoil, stricken with sorrow and shame,

To see disclosed, by such dread proof, how ill
That which is done accords with what is known
To reason, and by conscience is enjoined ;
How idly, how perversely, life's whole course,
To this conclusion, deviates from the line,
Or of the end stops short, proposed to all
At her aspiring outset.

Mark the babe

Not long accustomed to this breathing world ;
One that hath barely learned to shape a smile,
Though yet irrational of soul, to grasp
With tiny finger—to let fall a tear ;
And, as the heavy cloud of sleep dissolves,
To stretch his limbs, bemocking, as might seem,
The outward functions of intelligent man ;
A grave proficient in amusive feats
Of puppetry, that from the lap declare
His expectations, and announce his claims
To that inheritance which millions rue
That they were ever born to ! In due time
A day of solemn ceremonial comes ;
When they, for this Minor hold in trust
Rights that transcend the loftiest heritage
Of mere humanity, present their Charge,
For this occasion daintily adorned,
At the baptismal font. And when the pure
And consecrating element hath cleansed
The original stain, the child is there received
Into the second ark, Christ's church, with trust
That he, from wrath redeemed, therein shall float
Over the billows of this troublesome world
To the fair land of everlasting life.
Corrupt affections, covetous desires,

Are all renounced ; high as the thought of man
Can carry virtue, virtue is professed ;
A dedication made, a promise given
For due provision to control and guide,
And unremitting progress to ensure
In holiness and truth."

" You cannot blame,"
Here interposing fervently I said,
" Rites which attest that Man by nature lies
Bedded for good and evil in a gulf
Fearfully low ; nor will your judgment scorn
Those services, whereby attempt is made
To lift the creature toward that eminence
On which, now fallen, erewhile in majesty
He stood ; or if not so, whose top serene
At least he feels 'tis given him to deserv ;
Not without aspirations, evermore
Returning, and injunctions from within
Doubt to cast off and weariness ; in trust
That what the Soul perceives, if glory lost,
May be, through pains and persevering hope
Recovered ; or, if hitherto unknown,
Lies within reach, and one day shall be gained."

" I blame them not," he calmly answered—" no ;
The outward ritual and established forms
With which communities of men invest
These inward feelings, and the aspiring vows
To which the lips give public utterance
Are both a natural process ; and by me
Shall pass uncensured ; though the issue prove,
Bringing from age to age its own reproach,
Incongruous, impotent, and blank.—But, oh !

If to be weak is to be wretched—miserable,
As the lost Angel by a human voice
Hath mournfully pronounced, then, in my mind,
Far better not to move at all than move
By impulse sent from such illusive power,—
That finds and cannot fasten down ; that grasps
And is rejoiced, and loses while it grasps ;
That tempts, emboldens—for a time sustains,
And then betrays ; accuses and inflicts
Remorseless punishment ; and so retreads
The inevitable circle : better far
Than this, to graze the herb in thoughtless peace,
By foresight or remembrance, undisturbed !

Philosophy ! and thou more vatinted name
Religion ! with thy statelier retinue,
Faith, Hope, and Charity—from the visible world
Choose for your emblems whatsoe'er you find
Of safest guidance or of firmest trust —
The torch, the star, the anchor ; nor except
The cross itself, at whose unconscious feet
The generations of mankind have knelt
Ruefully seized, and shedding bitter tears,
And through that conflict seeking rest—of you.
High-titled Powers, am I constrained to ask,
Here standing, with the unvoyageable sky
In faint reflection of infinitude
Stretched overhead, and at my pensive feet
A subterraneous magazine of bones,
In whose dark vaults my own shall soon be laid,
Where are your triumphs ? your dominion where ?
And in what age admitted and confirmed ?
—Not for a happy land do I inquire,

Island or grove, that hides a blessed few
Who, with obedience willing and sincere,
To your serene authorities conform ;
But whom, I ask, of individual Souls,
Have ye withdrawn from passion's crooked ways,
Inspired, and thoroughly fortified ?—If the heart
Could be inspected to its inmost folds
By sight undazzled with the glare of praise,
Who shall be named—in the resplendent line
Of sages, martyrs, confessors—the man
Whom the best might of faith, wherever fix'd,
For one day's little compass, has preserv'd
From painful and discreditable shocks
Of contradiction, from some vague desire
Culpably cherished, or corrupt relapse
To some unsanctioned fear ?”

“ If this be so,
And Man,” said I, “ be in his noblest shape
Thus pitifully infirm ; then, he who made,
And who shall judge the creature, will forgive.
—Yet, in its general tenor, your complaint
Is all too true ; and surely not misplaced :
For, from this pregnant spot of ground, such
thoughts

Rise to the notice of a serious mind
By natural exhalation. With the dead
In their repose, the living in their mirth,
Who can reflect, unmoved, upon the round
Of smooth and solemnized complacencies,
By which, on Christian lands, from age to age
Profession mocks performance. Earth is sick,
And Heaven is weary, of the hollow words
Which States and Kingdoms utter when they talk

Of truth and justice. Turn to private life
And social neighborhood ; look we to ourselves ;
A light of duty shines on every day
For all ; and yet how few are warmed or cheered !
How few who mingle with their fellow-men
And still remain self-governed, and apart,
Like this our honored Friend ; and thence acquire
Right to expect his vigorous decline,
That promises to the end a blest old age !”

“ Yet,” with a smile of triumph thus exclaimed
The Solitary, “ in the life of man,
If to the poetry of common speech
Faith may be given, we see as in a glass
A true reflection of the circling year,
With all its seasons. Grant that Spring is there,
In spite of many a rough untoward blast,
Hopeful and promising with buds and flowers ;
Yet where is glowing Summer’s long rich day,
That *ought* to follow faithfully expressed ?
And mellow Autumn, charged with bounteous fruit,
Where is she imaged ? in what favored clime
Her lavish pomp, and ripe magnificence ?
—Yet, while the better part is missed, the worse
In man’s autumnal season is set forth
With a resemblance not to be denied,
And that contents him ; bowers that hear no more
The voice of gladness, less and less supply
Of outward sunshine and internal warmth ;
And, with this change, sharp air and falling leaves,
Foretelling aged Winter’s desolate sway.

How gay the habitations that bedeck
This fertile valley ! Not a house but seems
To give assurance of content within ;
Embosomed happiness, and placid love ;
As if the sunshine of the day were met
With answering brightness in the hearts of all
Who walk this favored ground. But chance-regards,
And notice forced upon incurious ears ;
These, if these only, acting in despite
Of the encomiums by my Friend pronounced
On humble life, forbid the judging mind
To trust the smiling aspect of this fair
And noiseless commonwealth. The simple race
Of mountaineers (by Nature's self removed
From foul temptations, and by constant care
Of a good shepherd tended as themselves
Do tend their flocks) partake man's general lot.
With little mitigation. They escape,
Perchance, the heavier woes of guilt ; feel not
The tedium of fantastic idleness :
Yet life, as with the multitude, with them
Is fashioned like an ill-constructed tale ;
That on the outset wastes its gay desires,
Its fair adventures, its enlivening hopes,
And pleasant interests—for the sequel leaving
Old things repeated with diminished grace ;
And all the labored novelties at best
Imperfect substitutes, whose use and power
Evince the want and weakness whence they spring."

While in this serious mood we held discourse,
The reverend Pastor toward the church-yard gate
Approached ; and, with a mild, respectful air

Of native cordiality, our Friend
Advanced to greet him. With a gracious mien
Was he received, and mutual joy prevailed.
Awhile they stood in conference, and I guess
That he, who now upon the mossy wall
Sate by my side, had vanished, if a wish
Could have transferred him to the flying clouds,
Or the least penetrable hiding-place
In his own valley's rocky guardianship.
—For me, I looked upon the pair, well pleased :
Nature had framed them both, and both were marked
By circumstance, with intermixture fine
Of contrast and resemblance. To an oak
Hardy and grand, a weather-beaten oak,
Fresh in the strength and majesty of age,
One might be likened : flourishing appeared,
Though somewhat past the fulness of his prime,
The other—like a stately sycamore,
That spreads, in gentle pomp, its honeyed shade.

A general greeting was exchanged ; and soon
The Pastor learned that his approach had given
A welcome interruption to discourse
Grave, and in truth too often sad.—“ Is Man
A child of hope ? Do generations press
On generations, without progress made ?
Halts the individual, ere his hairs be grey,
Perforce ? Are we a creature in whom good
Preponderates, or evil ? Doth the will
Acknowledge reason’s law ? A living power
Is virtue, or no better than a name,
Fleeting as health or beauty, and unsound ?
So that the only substance which remains,

(For thus the tenor of complaint hath run)
Among so many shadows, are the pains
And penalties of miserable life,
Doomed to decay, and then expire in dust !
—Our cogitations this way have been drawn,
These are the points," the Wanderer said, "on which
Our inquest turns.—Accord, good Sir ! the light
Of your experience to dispel this gloom :
By your persuasive wisdom shall the heart
That frets, or languishes, be stilled and cheered."

" Our nature," said the Priest, in mild reply,
" Angels may weigh and fathom : they perceive
With undistempered and unclouded spirit,
The object as it is ; but, for ourselves,
That speculative height *we* may not reach.
The good and evil are our own ; and we
Are that which we would contemplate from far.
Knowledge, for us, is difficult to gain—
Is difficult to gain, and hard to keep—
As virtue's self ; like virtue is beset
With snares ; tried, tempted, subject to decay.
Love, admiration, fear, desire, and hate,
Blind were we without these : through these alone
Are capable to notice or discern
Or to record ; we judge, but cannot be
Indifferent judges. 'Spite of proudest boast,
Reason, best reason, is to imperfect man
An effort only, and a noble aim ;
A crown, an attribute of sovereign power,
Still to be courted—never to be won.
—Look forth, or each man dive into himself ;
What sees he but a creature too perturbed ;

That is transported to excess ; that yearns,
Regrets, or trembles, wrongly, or too much ;
Hopes rashly, in disgust as rash recoils ;
Battens on spleen, or moulders in despair ?
Thus comprehension fails, and truth is missed ;
Thus darkness and delusion round our path
Spread, from disease, whose subtle injury lurks
Within the very faculty of sight.

Yet for the general purposes of faith
In Providence, for solace and support,
We may not doubt that who can best subject
The will to reason's law, can strictliest live
And act in that obedience, he shall gain
The clearest apprehension of those truths,
Which unassisted reason's utmost power
Is too infirm to reach. But, waiving this,
And our regards confining within bounds
Of less exalted consciousness, through which
The very multitude are free to range,
We safely may affirm that human life
Is either fair and tempting, a soft scene
Grateful to sight, refreshing to the soul,
Or a forbidden tract of cheerless view ;
Even as the same is looked at, or approached.
Thus, when in changeful April fields are white
With new-fallen snow, if from the sullen north
Your walk conduct you hither, ere the sun
Hath gained his noontide height, this churchyard,
filled
With mounds transversely lying side by side
From east to west, before you will appear
An unillumined, blank, and dreary, plain,

With more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom
Saddening the heart. Go forward, and look back;
Look, from the quarter whence the lord of light,
Of life, of love, and gladness doth dispense
His beams; which, unexcluded in their fall,
Upon the southern side of every grave
Have gently exercised a melting power;
Then will a vernal prospect greet your eye,
All fresh and beautiful, and green and bright,
Hopeful and cheerful:—vanished is the pall
That overspread and chilled the sacred turf,
Vanished or hidden; and the whole domain,
To some, too lightly minded, might appear
A meadow carpet for the dancing hours.
—This contrast, not unsuitable to life,
Is to that other state more apposite,
Death and its two-fold aspect! wintry—one,
Cold, sullen, blank, from hope and joy shut out;
The other, which the ray divine hath touched,
Replete with vivid promise, bright as spring.”

“ We see, then, as we feel,” the Wanderer thus
With a complacent animation spake,
“ And in your judgment, Sir ! the mind’s repose
On evidence is not to be ensured
By act of naked reason. Moral truth
Is no mechanic structure, built by rule;
And which, once built retains a stedfast shape
And undisturbed proportions; but a thing
Subject, you deem, to vital accidents;
And, like the water-lily, lives and thrives,
Whose root is fixed in stable earth, whose head
Floats on the tossing waves. With joy sincere

I re-salute these sentiments confirmed
By your authority. But how acquire
The inward principle that gives effect
To outward argument ; the passive will
Meek to admit ; the active energy,
Strong and unbounded to embrace, and firm
To keep and cherish ? how shall man unite
With self-forgetting tenderness of heart
And earth-despising dignity of soul ?
Wise in that union, and without it blind !”

“ The way,” said I, “ to court, if not obtain
The ingenuous mind, apt to be set aright ;
This, in the lonely dell discoursing, you
Declared at large ; and by what exercise
From visible nature, or the inner self
Power may be trained, and renovation brought
To those who need the gift. But, after all,
Is aught so certain as that man is doomed
To breathe beneath a vault of ignorance ?
The natural roof of that dark house in which
His soul is pent ! How little can be known—
This is the wise man’s sigh ; how far we err—
This is the good man’s not unfrequent pang !
And they perhaps err least, the lowly class
Whom a benign necessity compels
To follow reason’s least ambitious course ;
Such do I mean who, unperplexed by doubt,
And unincited by a wish to look
Into high objects farther than they may,
Pace to and fro, from morn till even-tide,
The narrow avenue of daily toil
For daily bread.”

" Yes," buoyantly exclaimed
The pale Recluse—" praise to the sturdy plough,
And patient spade ; praise to the simple crook,
And ponderous loom—resounding while it holds
Body and mind in one captivity ;
And let the light mechanic tool be hailed
With honor ; which, encasing by the power
Of long companionship, the artist's hand,
Cuts off that hand, with all its world of nerves,
From a too busy commerce with the heart !
—Inglorious implements of craft and toil,
Both ye that shape and build, and ye that force,
By slow solicitation, earth to yield
Her annual bounty, sparingly dealt forth
With wise reluctance ; you would I extol,
Nor for gross good alone which ye produce,
But for the impertinent and ceaseless strife
Of proofs and reasons ye preclude—in those
Who to your dull society are born,
And with their humble birthright rest content.
—Would I had ne'er renounced it !"

A slight flush
Of moral anger previously had tinged
The old Man's cheek ; but, at this closing turn
Of self-reproach, it passed away. Said he,
" That which we feel we utter ; as we think
So have we argued ; reaping for our pains
No visible recompense. For our relief
You," to the Pastor turning thus he spake,
" Have kindly interposed. May I entreat
Your further help ? The mine of real life
Dig for us ; and present us, in the shape
Of virgin ore, that gold which we, by pains

Fruitless as those of aëry alchemists,
Seek from the torturing crucible. There lies
Around us a domain where you have long
Watched both the outward course and inner heart :
Give us, for our abstractions, solid facts ;
For our disputes, plain pictures. Say what man
He is who cultivates yon hanging field ;
What qualities of mind she bears, who comes
For morn and evening service, with her pail,
To that green pasture ; place before our sight
The family who dwell within yon house
Fenced round with glittering laurel ; or in that
Below, from which the curling smoke ascends.
Or rather, as we stand on holy earth,
And have the dead around us, take from them
Your instances ; for they are both best known,
And by frail man most equitably judged.'
Epitomize the life ; pronounce, you can,
Authentic epitaphs on some of these
Who, from their lowly mansions hither brought,
Beneath this turf lie mouldering at our feet :
So, by your records, may our doubts be solved ;
And so, not searching higher, we may learn
To prize the breath we share with human kind ;
And look upon the dust of man with awe."

The Priest replied—" An office you impose
For which peculiar requisites are mine ;
Yet much, I feel, is wanting—else the task
Would be most grateful. True indeed it is
That they whom death has hidden from our sight
Are worthiest of the mind's regard ; with these
The future cannot contradict the past ;

Mortality's last exercise and proof
Is undergone ; the transit made that shows
The very Soul, revealed as she departs.
Yet, on your first suggestion, will I give,
Ere we descend into these silent vaults,
One picture from the living.

You behold,

High on the breast of yon dark mountain, dark
With stony barrenness, a shining speck
Bright as a sunbeam sleeping till a shower
Brush it away, or cloud pass over it ;
And such it might be deemed—a sleeping sunbeam.
But 'tis a plot of cultivated ground,
Cut off, an island in the dusky waste ;
And that attractive brightness is its own.
The lofty site, by nature framed to tempt
Amid a wilderness of rocks and stones
The tiller's hand, a hermit might have chosen,
For opportunity presented, thencee
Far forth to send his wandering eye o'er land
And ocean, and look down upon the works,
The habitations, and the ways of men,
Himself unseen ! But no tradition tells
That ever hermit dipped his maple dish
In the sweet spring that lurks 'mid yon green fields ;
And no such visionary views belong
To those who occupy and till the ground,
High on that mountain where they long have dwelt
A wedded pair in childless solitude.
A house of stones collected on the spot,
By rude hands built, with rocky knells in front,
Backed also by a ledge of rock, whose crest
Of birch-trees waves over the chimney top ;

A rough abode—in color, shape, and size,
Such as in unsafe times of border-war
Might have been wished for and contrived, to elude
The eye of roving plunderer—for their need
Suffices ; and unshaken bears the assault
Of their most dreaded foe, the strong South-west
In anger blowing from the distant sea.

—Alone within her solitary hut;
There, or within the compass of her fields,
At any moment may the Dame be found,
True as the stock-dove to her shallow nest
And to the grove that holds it. She beguiles
By intermingled work of house and field
The summer's day, and winter's ; with success
Not equal, but sufficient to maintain,
Even at the worst, a smooth stream of content,
Until the expected hour at which her Mate
From the far-distant quarry's vault returns ;
And by his converse crowns a silent day
With evening cheerfulness. In powers of mind,
In scale of culture, few among my flock
Hold lower rank than this sequestered pair :
But true humility descends from heaven ;
And that best gift of heaven hath fallen on them ;
Abundant recompense for every want.

—Stoop from your height, ye proud, and copy these !
Who, in their noiseless dwelling-place, can hear
The voice of wisdom whispering scripture texts
For the mind's government, or temper's peace ;
And recommending for their mutual need,
Forgiveness, patience, hope, and charity ?”

" Much was I pleased," the grey-haired Wanderer
said,

" When to those shining fields our notice first
You turned ; and yet more pleased have from your
lips

Gathered this fair report of them who dwell
In that retirement ; whither, by such course
Of evil hap or good as oft awaits
A tired way-faring man, once *I* was brought
While traversing alone yon mountain pass.
Dark on my road the autumnal evening fell,
And night succeeded with unusual gloom,
So hazardous that feet and hands became
Guides better than mine eyes—until a light
High in the gloom appeared, too high, methought,
For human habitation ; but I longed
To reach it, destitute of other hope.
I looked with steadiness as sailors look
On the north star, or watch-tower's distant lamp,
And saw the light—now fixed—and shifting now—
Not like a dancing meteor, but in line
Of never varying motion, to and fro.
It is no night-fire of the naked hills,
Thought I—some friendly covert must be near.
With this persuasion thitherward my steps
I turn, and reach at last the guiding light ;
Joy to myself ! but to the heart of her
Who there was standing on the open hill,
(The same kind Matron whom your tongue hath
praised)

Alarm and disappointment ! The alarm
Ceased, when she learned through what mishap I
came,

And by what help had gained those distant fields.
Drawn from her cottage on that aëry height,
Bearing a lantern in her hand she stood,
Or paced the ground—to guide her Husband home,
By that unwearyed signal, kenned afar ;
An anxious duty ! which the lofty site,
Traversed but by a few irregular paths,
Imposes, whensoe'er untoward chance
Detains him after his accustomed hour
Till night lies black upon the ground. ‘ But come,
Come,’ said the Matron, ‘ to our poor abode ;
Those dark rocks hide it !’ Entering, I beheld
A blazing fire—beside a cleanly hearth
Sate down ; and to her office, with leave asked,
The dame returned.

Or ere that glowing pile
Of mountain turf required the builder’s hand
Its wasted splendor to repair, the door
Opened, and she re-entered with glad looks,
Her Help-mate following. Hospitable fare,
Frank conversation, made the evening’s treat
Need a bewildered traveller wish for more ?
But more was given ; I studied as we sate
By the bright fire, the good Man’s form, and face,
Not less than beautiful ; an open brow
Of undisturbed humanity ; a cheek
Suffused with something of a feminine hue ;
Eyes beaming courtesy and mild regard ;
But, in the quicker turns of the discourse,
Expression slowly varying, that evinced
A turdy apprehension. From a fount
Lost, thought I, in the obscurities of time,
But honored once, those features and that mien

May have descended, though I see them here.
In such a man, so gentle and subdued,
Withal so graceful in his gentleness,
A race illustrious for heroic deeds,
Humbled, but not degraded, may expire.
This pleasing fancy (cherished and upheld
By sundry recollections of such fall
From high to low, ascent from low to high,
As books record, and even the careless mind
Cannot but notice among men and things)
Went with me to the place of my repose.

Roused by the crowing cock at dawn of day,
I yet had risen too late to interchange
A morning salutation with my Host,
Gone forth already to the far-off seat
Of his day's work. 'Three dark mid-winter months
'Pass,' said the Matron, 'and I never see,
'Save when the Sabbath brings its kind release,
'My Helpmate's face by light of day. He quits
'His door in darkness, nor till dusk returns.
'And, through Heaven's blessing, thus we gain the
bread
'For which we pray; and for the wants provide
'Of sickness, accident, and helpless age.
'Companions have I many; many friends,
'Dependants, comforters—my wheel, my fire,
'All day the house-clock ticking in mine ear,
'The cackling hen, the tender chicken brood.
'And the wild birds that gather round my porch.
'This honest sheep dog's countenance I read;
'With him can talk; nor blush to waste a word
'On creatures less intelligent and shewd.

' And if the blustering wind that drives the clouds
' Care not for me, he lingers round my door,
' And makes me pastime when our tempers suit ;—
' But, above all, my thoughts are my support,
' My comfort :—would that they were oftener fixed
' On what, for guidance in the way that leads
' To heaven I know, by my Redeemer taught.'

The Matron ended—nor could I forbear
To exclaim—' O happy ! yielding to the law
Of these privations, richer in the main !—
While thankless thousands are opprest and clogged
By ease and leisure ; by the very wealth
And pride of opportunity made poor ;
While tens of thousands falter in their path,
And sink, through utter want of cheering light;
For you the hours of labor do not flag ;
For you each evening hath its shining star,
And every Sabbath-day its golden sun.' "

" Yes !" said the Solitary with a smile
That seemed to break from an expanding heart,
" The untutored bird may found, and so construct,
And with such soft materials line, her nest
Fixed in the centre of a prickly brake,
That the thorns wound her not ; they only guard,
Powers not unjustly likened to those gifts
Of happy instinct which the woodland bird
Shares with her species, nature's grace sometimes
Upon the individual doth confer,
Among her higher creatures born and trained
To use of reason. And, I own that, tired
Of the ostentatious world—a swelling stage
With empty actions and vain passions stuffed,

And from the private struggles of mankind
Hoping far less than I could wish to hope,
Far less than once I trusted and believed—
I love to hear of those, who, not contending
Nor summoned to contend for virtue's prize,
Miss not the humbler good at which they aim,
Blest with a kindly faculty to blunt
The edge of adverse circumstance, and turn
Into their contraries the petty plagues
And hindrances with which they stand beset.
In early youth, among my native hills,
I knew a Scottish Peasant who possessed
A few small crofts or stone-encumbered ground ;
Masses of every shape and size, that lay
Scattered about under the mouldering walls
Of a rough precipice ; and some, apart,
In quarters unobnoxious to such chance,
As if the moon had showered them down in spite.
But he repined not. Though the plough was scared
By these obstructions, 'round the shady stones
A fertilising moisture,' said the Swain,
'Gathers, and is preserved ; and feeding dews
'And damps, through all the droughty summer day
'From out their substance issuing, maintain
'Herbage that never fails : no grass springs up
'So green, so fresh, so plentiful, as mine !'
But thinly sown these natures : rare, at least,
The mutual aptitude of seed and soil
That yields such kindly product. He, whose bed
Perhaps yon loose sods cover, the poor Pensioner
Brought yesterday from our sequestered dell
Here to lie down in lasting quiet, he,
If living now, could otherwise report

Of rustic loneliness : that grey-haired Orphan—
So call him, for humanity to him
No parent was—feelingly could have told,
In life, in death, what solitude can breed
Of selfishness, and cruelty, and vice ;
Or, if it breed not, hath not power to cure.
—But your compliance, Sir ! with our request
My words too long have hindered.”

Undeterred,

Perhaps incited rather, by these shocks,
In no ungracious opposition, given
To the confiding spirit of his own
Experienc'd faith, the reverend Pastor said,
Around him looking ; “ Where shall I begin ?
Who shall be first selected from my flock
Gathered together in their peaceful fold ? ”
He paused—and having lifted up his eyes
To the pure heaven, he cast them down again
Upon the earth beneath his feet ; and spake —

“ To a mysteriously-united pair
This place is consecrate ; to Death and Life,
And to the best affections that proceed
From their conjunction ; consecrate to faith
In him who bled for man upon the cross ;
Hallowed to revelation ; and no less
To reason's mandates ; and the hopes divine
Of pure imagination ;—above all,
To charity, and love, that have provided,
Within these precincts, a capacious bed
And receptacle, open to the good
And evil, to the just, and the unjust ;
In which they find an equal resting-place :

Even as the multitude of kindred brooks
And streams, whose murmur fills this hollow vale,
Whether their course be turbulent or smooth,
Their waters clear or sullied, all are lost
Within the bosom of yon crystal Lake,
And end their journey in the same repose !

And blest are they who sleep ; and we that know,
While in a spot like this we breathe and walk,
That all beneath us by the wings are covered
Of motherly humanity, outspread
And gathering all within their tender shade,
Though loth and slow to come ! A battle-field,
In stillness left when slaughter is no more,
With this compared, makes a strange spectacle !
A dismal prospect yields the wild shore strewn
With wrecks, and trod by feet of young and old
Wandering about in miserable search
Of friends or kindred, whom the angry sea
Restores not to their prayer ! Ah ! who would think
That all the scattered subjects which compose
Earth's melancholy vision through the space
Of all her climes—these wretched, these depraved
To virtue lost, insensible of pence,
From the delights of charity cut off,
To pity dead, the oppressor and the opprest ;
Tyrants who utter the destroying word,
And slaves who will consent to be destroyed—
Were of one species with the sheltered few,
Who, with a dutiful and tender hand,
Lodged, in a dear, appropriated spot,
~~This~~ file of infants ; some that never breathed
The vital air ; others, which, though allowed

That privilege, did yet expire too soon,
Or with too brief a warning, to admit
Administration of the holy rite
That lovingly consigns the babe to the arms
Of Jesus, and his everlasting care.
These that in trembling hope are laid apart;
And the besprinkled nursling, unrequired
Till he begins to smile upon the breast
That feeds him; and the tottering little-one
Taken from air and sunshine when the rose
Of infancy first blooms upon his cheek;
The thinking, thoughtless, school-boy; the bold youth
Of soul impetuous, and the bashful maid
Smitten while all the promises of life
Are opening round her; those of middle age,
Cast down while confident in strength they stand,
Like pillars fixed more firmly, as might seem,
And more secure, by very weight of all
That, for support, rests on them; the decayed
And burthensome; and lastly, that poor few
Whose light of reason is with age extinct;
The hopeful and the hopeless, first and last,
The earliest summoned and the longest spared—
Are here deposited, with tribute paid
Various, but unto each some tribute paid;
As if, amid these peaceful hills and groves,
Society were touched with kind concern,
And gentle 'Nature grieved, that one should die;'
Or, if the change demanded no regret,
Observed the liberating stroke—and blessed.

And whence that tribute? wherefore these regards?

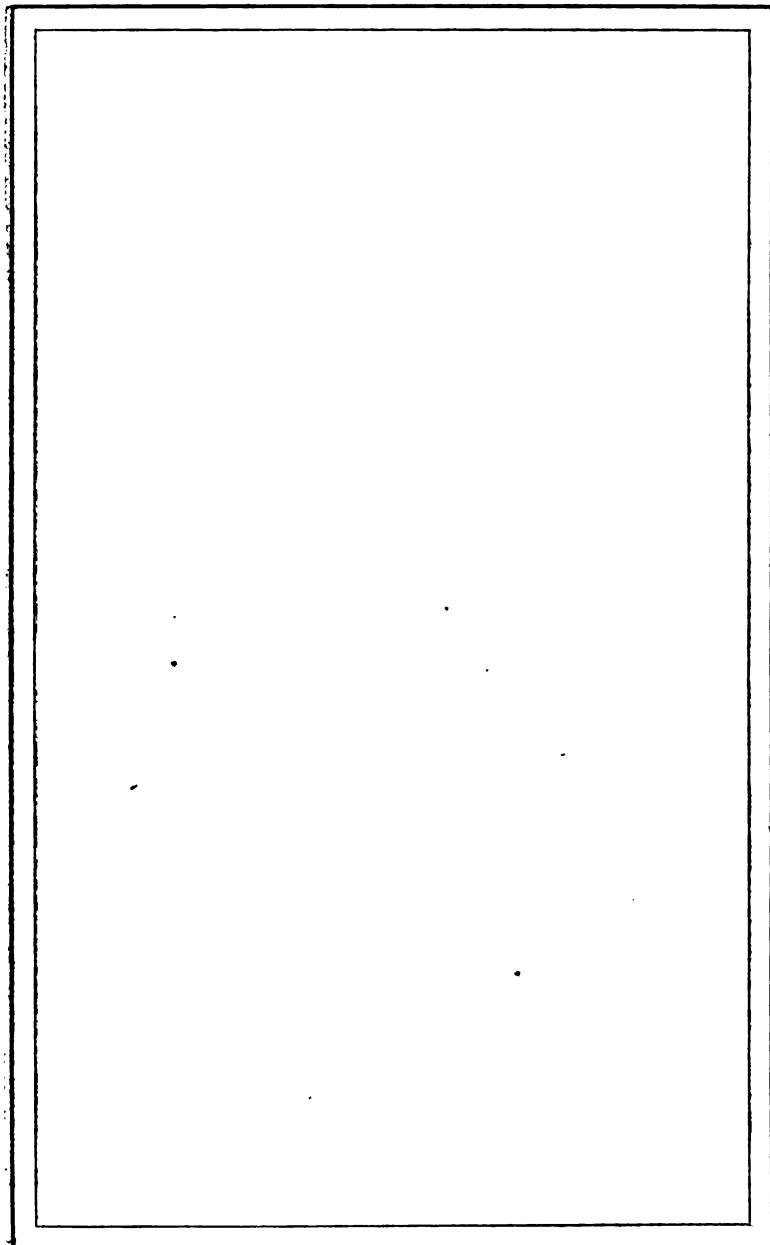
Not from the naked *Heart* alone of Man
(Though claiming high distinction upon earth
As the sole spring and fountain-head of tears,
His own peculiar utterance for distress
Or gladness)—No,” the philosophic Priest
Continued, “ ‘t is not in the vital seat
Of feeling to produce them, without aid
From the pure soul, the soul sublime and pure;
With her two faculties of eye and ear
The one by which a creature, whom his sins
Have rendered prone, can upward look to heaven;
The other that empowers him to perceive
The voice of Deity, on height and plain,
Whispering those truths in stillness, which the WORD,
To the four quarters of the winds, proclaims.
Not without such assistance could the use
Of these benign observances prevail:
Thus are they born, thus fostered, thus maintained,
And by the care prospective of our wise
Forefathers, who, to guard against the shocks
The fluctuation and the decay of things,
Embodyed and established these high truths
In solemn institutions:—men convinced
That life is love and immortality,
The being one, and one the element,
There lies the channel, and original bed,
From the beginning, hollowed out and scooped
For Man’s affections—else betrayed and lost,
And swallowed up ’mid deserts infinite!
This is the genuine course, the aim, and end
Of prescient reason; all conclusions else
Are abject, vain, presumptuous, and perverse.

The faith partaking of those holy times,
Life, I repeat, is energy of love
Divine or human ; exercised in pain,
In strife, and tribulation ; and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy." "

THE EXCURSION.

BOOK SIXTH.

**THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE
MOUNTAINS.**



THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

ARGUMENT.

Poet's Address to the State and Church of England.—The Pastor not inferior to the ancient Worthies of the Church.—He begins his Narratives with an instance of unrequited Love.—Anguish of mind subdued, and how.—The lonely Miner.—An instance of perseverance—Which leads by contrast to an example of abused talents, irresolution, and weakness.—Solitary, applying this covertly to his own case, asks for an instance of some Stranger, whose dispositions may have led him to end his days here.—Pastor, in answer, gives an account of the harmonizing influence of Solitude upon two men of opposite principles, who had encountered agitations in public life.—The rule by which Peace may be obtained expressed, and where.—Solitary hints at an overpowering Fatality.—Answer of the Pastor.—What subjects he will exclude from his Narrative.—Conversation upon this.—Instance of an unamiable character, a Female, and why given.—Contrasted with this, a meek sufferer, from unguarded and betrayed love.—Instance of heavier guilt, and its consequences to the Offender.—With this instance of a Marriage Contract broken is contrasted one of a Widower, evidencing his faithful affection towards his deceased wife by his care of their female Children.

HAIL to the crown by Freedom shaped—to gird
An English Sovereign's brow ! and to the throne
Whereon he sits ! Whose deep foundations lie
In veneration and the people's love ;
Whose steps are equity, whose seat is law.
—Hail to the State of England ! And conjoin
With this a salutation as devout,
Made to the spiritual fabric of her Church ;

Founded in truth ; by blood of Martyrdom
Cemented ; by the hands of Wisdom reared
In beauty of holiness, with ordered pomp,
Decent and unreproved. The voice, that greets
The majesty of both, shall pray for both ;
That, mutually protected and sustained,
They may endure long as the sea surrounds
This favored Land, or sunshine warms her soil.

And O, ye swelling hills, and spacious plains !
Besprent from shore to shore with steeple-towers,
And spires whose ' silent finger points to heaven ;'
Nor wanting, at wide intervals, the bulk
Of ancient minster lifted above the cloud
Of the dense air, which town or city breeds
To intercept the sun's glad beams—may ne'er
That true succession fail of English hearts,
Who, with ancestral feeling, can perceive
What in those holy structures ye possess
Of ornamental interest, and the charm
Of pious sentiment diffused afar,
And human charity, and social love.
—Thus never shall the indignities of time
Approach their reverend graces, unopposed ;
Nor shall the elements be free to hurt
Their fair proportions ; nor the blinder rage
Of bigot zeal madly to overturn ;
And, if the desolating hand of war
Spare them, they shall continue to bestow,
Upon the thronged abodes of busy men
(Depraved, and ever prone to fill the mind
Exclusively with transitory things)

An air and mien of dignified pursuit ;
Of sweet civility, on rustic wilds.

The Poet, fostering for his native land
Such hope, entreats that servants may abound
Of those pure altars worthy ; ministers
Detached from pleasure, to the love of gain
Superior, insusceptible of pride,
And by ambitious longings undisturbed ;
Men whose delight is where their duty leads
Or fixes them ; whose least distinguished day
Shines with some portion of that heavenly lustre
Which makes the Sabbath lovely in the sight
Of blessed angels, pitying human cares.
—And, as on earth it is the doom of truth
To be perpetually attacked by foes
Open or covert, be that priesthood still,
For her defence, replenished with a band
Of strenuous champions, in scholastic arts
Thoroughly disciplined ; (if in the course
Of the revolving world's disturbances
Cause should recur, which righteous Heaven avert !
To meet such trial, (from their spiritual sires
Degenerate ; who, constrained to wield the sword
Of disputation, shrunk not, though assailed
With hostile din, and combating in sight
Of angry umpires, partial and unjust ;
And did, thereafter, bathe their hands in fire,
So to declare the conscience satisfied :
Nor for their bodies would accept release ;
But, blessing God and praising him, bequeathed
With their last breath, from out the smouldering
flame.

The faith which they by diligence had earned,
Or, through illuminating grace, received,
For their dear countrymen, and all mankind.
O high example, constancy divine !

Even such a Man (inheriting the zeal
And from the sanctity of elder times
Not deviating,—a priest, the like of whom,
If multiplied, and in their stations set,
Would o'er the bosom of a joyful land
Spread true religion and her genuine fruits)
Before me stood that day ; on holy ground
Fraught with the relics of mortality,
Exalting tender themes, by just degrees
To lofty raised ; and to the highest, last ;
The head and mighty paramount of truths,—
Immortal life, in never-fading worlds,
For mortal creatures, conquered and secured.

That basis laid, those principles of faith
Announced, as a preparatory act
Of reverence done to the spirit of the place,
The Pastor cast his eyes upon the ground ;
Not, as before, like one oppressed with awe,
But with a mild and social cheerfulness ;
Then to the Solitary turned, and spake.

“ At morn or eve, in your retired domain,
Perchance you not unfrequently have marked
A Visitor—in quest of herbs and flowers ;
Too delicate employ, as would appear,
For one, who, though of drooping mien, had yet
From nature’s kindliness received a frame
Robust as ever rural labor bred.”

The Solitary answered: "Such a Form
 Full well I recollect. We often crossed
 Each other's path ; but, as the Intruder seemed
 Fondly to prize the silence which he kept,
 And I as willingly did cherish mine,
 We met, and passed, like shadows. I have heard,
 From my good Host, that being crazed in brain
 By unrequited love, he scaled the rocks,
 Dived into caves, and pierced the matted woods,
 In hope to find some virtuous herb of power
 To cure his malady !

The Vicar smiled,—
 "Alas ! before to-morrow's sun goes down
 His habitation will be here : for him
 That open grave is destined."

"Died he then
 Of pain and grief ?" the Solitary asked,
 "Do not believe it ; never could that be!"

"He loved," the Vicar answered, "deeply loved,
 Loved fondly, truly, fervently ; and dared
 At length to tell his love, but sued in vain ;
 Rejected, yea repelled ; and, if with scorn
 Upon the haughty maiden's brow, 't is but
 A high-prized plume which female Beauty wears
 In wantonness of conquest, or puts on
 To cheat the world, or from herself to hide
 Humiliation, when no longer free.
That he could brook, and glory in ;—but when
 The tidings came that she whom he had wooed
 Was wedded to another, and his heart
 Was forced to rend away its only hope ;
 Then, Pity could have scarcely found on earth

An object worthier of regard than he,
In the transition of that bitter hour !
Lost was she, lost ; nor could the Sufferer say
That in the act of preference he had been
Unjustly dealt with ; but the Maid was gone !
Had vanished from his prospects and desires ;
Not by translation to the heavenly choir
Who have put off their mortal spoils—ah no !
She lives another's wishes to complete,—
‘Joy be their lot, and happiness,’ he cried,
‘His lot and hers, as misery must be mine !’

Such was that strong concussion ; but the Man,
Who trembled, trunk and limbs, like some huge oak
By a fierce tempest shaken, soon resumed
The stedfast quiet natural to a mind
Of composition gentle and sedate,
And, in its movements, circumspect and slow.
To books, and to the long-forsaken desk,
O'er which enchain'd by science he had loved
To bend, he stoutly re-addressed himself,
Resolved to quell his pain, and search for truth
With keener appetite (if that might be)
And closer industry. Of what ensued
Within the heart no outward sign appeared
Till a betraying sickliness was seen
To tinge his cheek ; and through his frame it crept
With slow mutation unoncealable ;
Such universal change as autumn makes
In the fair body of a leafy grove
Discolored, then divested.

‘T is affirmed
By poets skilled in nature's secret ways

That Love will not submit to be controlled
 By mastery :—and the good Man lacked not friend
 Who strove to instil this truth into his mind,
 A mind in all heart-mysteries unversed.
 ‘ Go to the hills,’ said one, ‘ remit awhile
 ‘ This baneful diligence :—at early morn
 ‘ Court the fresh air, explore the heaths and woods ;
 ‘ And, leaving it to others to foretell,
 ‘ By calculations sage, the ebb and flow
 ‘ Of tides, and when the moon will be eclipsed,
 ‘ Do you, for your own benefit, construct
 ‘ A calendar of flowers, plucked as they blow
 ‘ Where health abides and cheerfulness, and peace.’
 The attempt was made ;—tis needless to report
 How hopelessly ; but innocence is strong,
 And an entire simplicity of mind
 A thing most sacred in the eye of Heaven ;
 That opens, for such sufferers, relief
 Within the soul, fountains of grace divine ;
 And doth commend their weakness and disease
 To Nature’s care, assisted in her office
 By all the elements that round her wait
 To generate, to preserve, and to restore ;
 And by her beautiful array of forms
 Shedding sweet influence from above ; or pure
 Delight exhaling from the ground they tread.”

“ Impute it not to impatience, if,” exclaimed
 The Wanderer, “ I infer that he was healed
 By perseverance in the course prescribed.”

“ You do not err : the powers, that had been lost
 By slow degrees, were gradually regained ;

The fluttering nerves composed ; the beating heart
In rest established ; and the jarring thoughts
To harmony restored.—But yon dark mould
Will cover him, in the fulness of his strength,
Hastily smitten by a fever's force ;
Yet not with stroke so sudden as refused
Time to look back with tenderness on her
Whom he had loved in passion ; and to send
Some farewell words—with one, but one, request ;
That, from his dying hand, she would accept
Of his possessions that which most he prized ;
A book, upon whose leaves some chosen plants,
By his own hand disposed with nicest care,
In undecaying beauty were preserved ;
Mute register, to him, of time and place,
And various fluctuations in the breast ;
To her, a monument of faithful love
Conquered, and in tranquillity retained !

Close to his destined habitation, lies
One who achieved a humbler victory,
Though marvellous in its kind. A place there is
High in these mountains, that allured a band
Of keen adventurers to unite their pains
In search of precious ore : they tried, were foiled—
And all desisted, all, save him alone.
He, taking counsel of his own clear thoughts,
And trusting only to his own weak hands,
Urged unremittingly the stubborn work,
Unseconded, uncountenanced ; then, as time
Passed on, while still his lonely efforts found
No recompense, derided ; and at length,
By many pitied, as insane of mind ;

By others dreaded as the luckless thrall
 Of subterranean Spirits feeding hope
 By various mockery of sight and sound ;
 Hope after hope, encouraged and destroyed.
 —But when the lord of seasons had matured
 The fruits of earth through space of twice ten years,
 The mountain's entrails offered to his view
 And trembling grasp the long-deferred reward.
 Not with more transport did Columbus greet
 A world, his rich discovery ! But our Swain,
 A very hero till his point was gained,
 Proved all unable to support the weight
 Of prosperous fortune. On the fields he looked
 With an unsettled liberty of thought,
 Wishes and endless schemes ; by daylight walked
 Giddy and restless ; ever and anon
 Quaffed in his gratitude immoderate cups ;
 And truly might be said to die of joy !
 He vanished ; but conspicuous to this day
 The path remains that linked his cottage-door
 To the mine's mouth ; a long and slanting track,
 Upon the rugged mountain's stony side,
 Worn by his daily visits to and from
 The darksome centre of a constant hope.
 This vestige, neither force of beating rain,
 Nor the vicissitudes of frost and thaw
 Shall cause to fade, till ages pass away ;
 And it is named, in memory of the event,
 The PATH OF PERSEVERANCE."

"Thou from whom
 Man has his strength," exclaimed the Wanderer, "oh !
 Do thou direct it ! To the virtuous grant
 The penetrative eye which can perceive

In this blind world the guiding vein of hope ;
That, like this Laborer, such may dig their way,
• Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified ;'
Grant to the wise *his* firmness of resolve !”

“ That prayer were not superfluous,” said the
Priest,
“ Amid the noblest relics, proudest dust,
That Westminster, for Britain’s glory, holds
Within the bosom of her awful pile,
Ambitiously collected. Yet the sigh,
Which wafts that prayer to heaven, is due to all,
Wherever laid, who living fell below
Their virtue’s humbler mark ; a sigh of *pain*
If to the opposite extreme they sank.
How would you pity her who yonder rests ;
Him, farther off ; the pair, who here are laid ;
But, above all, that mixture of earth’s mould
Whom sight of this green hillock to my mind
Recalls !

He lived not till his locks were nipped
By seasonable frost of age ; nor died
Before his temples, prematurely forced
To mix the manly brown with silver grey,
Gave obvious instance of the sad effect
Produced, when thoughtless Folly hath usurped
The natural crown that sage Experience wears.
Gay, volatile, ingenuous, quick to learn,
And prompt to exhibit all that he possessed
Or could perform ; a zealous actor, hired
Into the troop of mirth, a soldier, sworn
Into the lists of giddy enterprise—
Such was he ; yet, as if within his frame

Two several souls alternately had lodged,
Two sets of manners could the Youth put on ;
And, fraught with antics as the Indian bird
That writhes and chatters in her wiry cage,
Was graceful when it pleased him, smooth and still
As the mute swan that floats adown the stream,
Or, on the waters of the unruffled lake,
Anchors her placid beauty. Not a leaf,
That flutters on the bough, lighter than he ;
And not a flower, that droops in the green shade,
More winningly reserved ! If ye inquire
How such consummate elegance was bred
Amid those wilds, this answer may suffice ;
'T was Nature's will ; who sometimes undertakes,
For the reproof of human vanity,
Art to outstrip in her peculiar walk.
Hence, for this Favorite—lavishly endowed
With personal gifts, and bright instinctive wit,
While both, embellishing each other, stood
Yet farther recommended by the charm
Of fine demeanor, and by dance and song,
And skill in letters—every fancy shaped
Fair expectations ; nor, when to the world's
Capacious field forth went the Adventurer, there
Were he and his attainments overlooked,
Or scantily rewarded ; but all hopes,
Cherished for him, he suffered to depart,
Like blighted buds ; or clouds that mimicked land
Before the sailor's eye ; or diamond drops
That sparkling decked the morning grass ; or aught
That was attractive, and hath ceased to be !

Yet, when this Prodigal returned, the rites
Of joyful greeting were on him bestowed,
Who, by humiliation undeterred,
Sought for his weariness a place of rest
Within his Father's gates.—Whence came he?—
clothed
In tattered garb, from hovels where abides
Necessity, the stationary host
Of vagrant poverty; from rifted barns
Where no one dwells but the wide-staring owl
And the owl's prey; from these bare haunts, to which
He had descended from the proud saloon,
He came, the ghost of beauty and of health,
The wreck of gaiety! But soon revived
In strength, in power refitted, he renewed
His suit to Fortune; and she smiled again
Upon a fickle Ingrate. Thrice he rose,
Thrice sank as willingly. For he—whose nerves
Were used to thrill with pleasure, while his voice
Softly accompanied the tuneful harp,
By the nice finger of fair ladies touched
In glittering halls—was able to derive
No less enjoyment from an abject choice.
Who happier for the moment—who more blithe
Than this fallen Spirit? in those dreary holds
His talents leading to exalt the freaks
Of merry-making beggars,—now, provoked
To laughter multiplied in louder peals
By his malicious wit; then, all enchain'd
With mute astonishment, themselves to see
In their own hearts outdone, their fame eclipsed,
As by the very presence of the Fiend
Who dictates and inspires illusive feats,

For knavish purposes ! The city, too,
 (With shame I speak it) to her guilty bowers
 Allured him, sunk so low in self-respect
 As there to linger, there to eat his bread,
 Hired minstrel of voluptuous blandishment ;
 Charming the air with skill of hand or voice,
 Listen who would, be wrought upon who might,
 Sincerely wretched hearts, or falsely gay.
 —Such the too frequent tenor of his boast
 In ears that relished the report ;—but all
 Was from his Parents happily concealed ;
 Who saw enough for blame and pitying love.
 They also were permitted to receive
 His last, repentant breath ; and closed his eyes,
 No more to open on that irksome world
 Where he had long existed in the state
 Of a young fowl beneath one mother hatched,
 Though from another sprung, different in kind :
 Where he had lived, and could not cease to live,
 Distracted in propensity ; content
 With neither element of good or ill ;
 And yet in both rejoicing ; man unblest ;
 Of contradictions infinite the slave,
 Till his deliverance, when Mercy made him
 One with himself, and one with them that sleep.”

“ ‘T is strange,’ observed the Solitary, “ strange
 It seems, and scarcely less than pitiful,
 That in a land where charity provides
 For all that can no longer feed themselves,
 A man like this should choose to bring his shame
 To the parental door ; and with his sighs
 Infect the air which he had freely breathed

In happy infancy. He could not pine,
Through lack of converse ; no—he must have found
Abundant exercise for thought and speech,
In his dividual being, self-reviewed,
Self-catechised, self-punished.—Some there are
Who, drawing near their final home, and much
And daily longing that the same were reached,
Would rather shun than seek the fellowship
Of kindred mould.—Such haply here are laid ?”

“ Yes,” said the Priest, “ the Genius of our hills—
Who seems, by these stupendous barriers cast
Round his domain, desirous not alone
To keep his own, but also to exclude
All other progeny—doth sometimes lure,
Even by his studied depth of privacy,
The unhappy alien hoping to obtain
Concealment, or seduced by wish to find,
In place from outward molestation free,
Helps to internal ease. Of many such
Could I discourse ; but as their stay was brief,
So their departure only left behind
Fancies and loose conjectures. Other trace
Survives, for worthy mention, of a pair
Who, from the pressure of their several fates,
Meeting as strangers, in a petty town
Whose blue roofs ornament a distant reach
Of this far-winding vale, remained as friends
True to their choice ; and gave their bones in trust
To this loved cemetery, here to lodge
With unescutcheoned privacy interred
Far from the family vault.—A Chieftain one
By right of birth ; within whose spotless breast

The fire of ancient Caledonia burned :
He, with the foremost, whose impatience hailed
The Stuart, landing to resume, by force
Of arms, the crown which bigotry had lost,
Aroused his clan ; and, fighting at their head,
With his brave sword, endeavored to prevent
Culloden's fatal overthrow. Escaped
From that disastrous rout, to foreign shores
He fled ; and when the lenient hand of time
Those troubles had appeased, he sought and gained,
For his obscured condition, an obscure
Retreat, within this nook of English ground.

The other, born in Britain's southern tract,
Had fixed his milder loyalty, and placed
His gentler sentiments of love and hate,
There, where *they* placed them who in conscience
prized
The new succession, as a line of kings
Whose oath had virtue to protect the land
Against the dire assaults of papacy
And arbitrary rule. But launch thy bark
On the distempered flood of public life,
And cause for most rare triumph will be thine
If, spite of keenest eye and steadiest hand,
The stream, that bears thee forward, prove not, soon
Or late, a perilous master. He—who oft,
Beneath the battlements and stately trees
That round his mansion cast a sober gloom,
Had moralized on this, and other truths
Of kindred import, pleased and satisfied—
Was forced to vent his wisdom with a sigh
Heaved from the heart in fortune's bitterness,

When he had crushed a plentiful estate
By ruinous contest, to obtain a seat
In Britain's senate. Fruitless was the attempt:
And while the uproar of that desperate strife
Continued yet to vibrate on his ear,
The vanquished Whig, under a borrowed name,
(For the mere sound and echo of his own
Haunted him with sensations of disgust
That he was glad to lose) slunk from the world
To the deep shade of those untravelled Wilds;
In which the Scottish Laird had long possessed
An undisturbed abode. Here, then, they met,
Two doughty champions; flaming Jacobite
And sullen Hanoverian! You might think
That losses and vexations, less severe
Than those which they had severally sustained,
Would have inclined each to abate his zeal
For this ungrateful cause; no,—I have heard
My reverend Father tell that, 'mid the calm
Of that small town encountering thus, they filled,
Daily, its bowling-green with harmless strife;
Plagued with uncharitable thoughts the church;
And vexed the market-place. But in the breasts
Of these opponents gradually was wrought,
With little change of general sentiment,
Such leaning towards each other, that their days
By choice were spent in constant fellowship;
And if, at times, they fretted with the yoke,
Those very bickerings made them love it more.

A favorite boundary to their lengthened walks
This Church-yard was. And, whether they had come
Treading their path in sympathy and linked

In social converse, or by some short space
Discreetly parted to preserve the peace,
One spirit seldom failed to extend its sway
Over both minds, when they awhile had marked
The visible quiet of this holy ground,
And breathed its soothing air ;—the spirit of hope
And saintly magnanimity ; that—spurning
The field of selfish difference and dispute,
And every care which transitory things,
Earth and the kingdoms of the earth, create—
Doth, by a rapture of forgetfulness, .
Preclude forgiveness, from the praise debarred,
Which else the Christian virtue might have claimed.

There live who yet remember here to have seen
Their courtly figures, seated on the stump
Of an old yew, their favorite resting-place.
But as the remnant of the long-lived tree
Was disappearing by a swift decay,
They, with joint care, determined to erect,
Upon its site, a dial, that might stand
For public use preserved, and thus survive
As their own private monument : for this
Was the particular spot, in which they wished
(And Heaven was pleased to accomplish the desire)
That, undivided, their remains should lie.
So, where the mouldered tree had stood, was raised
yon structure, framing, with the ascent of steps
That to the decorated pillar lead,
A work of art more sumptuous than might seem
To suit this place ; yet built in no proud scorn
Of rustic homeliness ; they only aimed
To ensure for it respectful guardianship.

Around the margin of the plate, whereon
The shadow falls to note the stealthy hours,
Winds an inscriptive legend."—At these words
Thither we turned; and gathered, as we read,
The appropriate sense, in Latin numbers couched:
*'Time flies; it is his melancholy task
To bring, and bear away, delusive hopes,
And re-produce the troubles he destroys.
But, while his blindness thus is occupied,
Discerning Mortal! do thou serve the will
Of Time's eternal Master, and that peace
Which the world wants, shall be for thee confirmed!'*

"Smooth verse, inspired by no unlettered Muse,"
Exclaimed the Sceptic, "and the strain of thought
Accords with nature's language;—the soft voice
Of yon white torrent falling down the rocks
Speaks, less distinctly, to the same effect.
If, then, their blended influence be not lost
Upon our hearts, not wholly lost, I grant,
Even upon mine, the more are we required
To feel for those among our fellow-men,
Who, offering no obeisance to the world,
Are yet made desperate by 'too quick a sense
Of constant infelicity,' cut off
From peace like exiles on some barren rock,
Their life's appointed prison; not more free
Than sentinels, between two armies, set,
With nothing better, in the chill night air,
Than their own thoughts to comfort them. Say why
That ancient story of Prometheus chained
To the bare rock, on frozen Caucasus;
The vulture, the inexhaustible repast

Drawn from his vitals? Say what meant the woes
By Tantalus entailed upon his race,
And the dark sorrows of the line of Thebes?
Fictions in form, but in their substance truths,
Tremendous truths! familiar to the men
Of long-past times, nor obsolete in ours.
Exchange the shepherd's frock of native grey
For robes with regal purple tinged; convert
The crook into a sceptre; give the pomp
Of circumstance; and here the tragic Muse
Shall find apt subjects for her highest art.
Amid the groves, under the shadowy hills,
The generations are prepared; the pangs,
The internal pangs, are ready; the dread strife
Of poor humanity's afflicted will
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny."

"Though," said the Priest in answer, "these be
terms
Which a divine philosophy rejects,
We, whose established and unfailing trust
Is in controlling Providence, admit
That, through all stations, human life abounds
With mysteries;—for, if Faith were left untried,
How could the might, that lurks within her, then
Be shown? her glorious excellence—that ranks
Among the first of Powers and Virtues—proved?
Our system is not fashioned to preclude
That sympathy which you for others ask;
And I could tell, not travelling for my theme
Beyond these humble graves, of grievous crimes
And strange disasters; but I pass them by,
Loth to disturb what Heaven hath hushed in peace.

—Still less, far less, am I inclined to treat
Of Man degraded in his Maker's sight
By the deformities of brutish vice :
For, in such portraits, though a vulgar face
And a coarse outside of repulsive life
And unaffectionate manners might at once
Be recognised by all—" "Ah ! do not think,"
The Wanderer somewhat eagerly exclaimed,
" Wish could be ours that you, for such poor gain,
(Gain shall I call it ?—gain of what ?—for whom ?)
Should breathe a word tending to violate
Your own pure spirit. Not a step we look for
In slight of that forbearance and reserve
Which common human-heartedness inspires,
And mortal ignorance and frailty claim,
Upon this sacred ground, if nowhere else."

" True," said the Solitary, " be it far
From us to infringe the laws of charity.
Let judgment here in mercy be pronounced ;
This, self-respecting Nature prompts, and this
Wisdom enjoins ; but if the thing we seek
Be genuine knowledge, bear we then in mind
How, from his lofty throne, the sun can fling
Colors as bright on exhalations bred
By weedy pool or pestilential swamp,
As, by the rivulet sparkling where it runs,
Or the pellucid lake."

" Small risk," said I,
" Of such illusion do we here incur ;
Temptation here is none to exceed the truth ;
No evidence appears that they who rest
Within this ground, were covetous of praise,

Or of remembrance even, deserved or not.
Green is the Church-yard, beautiful and green,
Ridge rising gently by the side of ridge,
A heaving surface, almost wholly free
From interruption of sepulchral stones,
And mantled o'er with aboriginal turf
And everlasting flowers. These Dalesmen trust
The lingering gleam of their departed lives
To oral record, and the silent heart;
Depositories faithful and more kind
Than fondest epitaph: for, if those fail,
What boots the sculptured tomb? And who can
blame,
Who rather would not envy, men that feel
This mutual confidence; if, from such source,
The practice flow,—if thence, or from a deep
And general humility in death?
Nor should I much condemn it, if it spring
From disregard of time's destructive power,
As only capable to prey on things
Of earth, and human nature's mortal part.

Yet—in less simple districts, where we see
Stone lift its forehead emulous of stone
In courting notice; and the ground all paved
With commendations of departed worth;
Reading, where'er we turn, of innocent lives
Of each domestic charity fulfilled,
And sufferings meekly borne—I, for my part,
Though with the silence pleased that here prevails,
Among those fair recitals also range,
Soothed by the natural spirit which they breathe.
And, in the centre of a world whose soil

Is rank with all unkindness, compassed round
With such memorials, I have sometimes felt,
It was no momentary happiness
To have *one* Enclosure where the voice that speaks
In envy or detraction is not heard ;
Which malice may not enter ; where the traces
Of evil inclinations are unknown ;
Where love and pity tenderly unite
With resignation ; and no jarring tone
Intrudes, the peaceful concert to disturb
Of amity and gratitude."

" Thus sanctioned,"

The Pastor said, " I willingly confine
My narratives to subjects that excite
Feelings with these accordant ; love, esteem,
And admiration ; lifting up a veil,
A sunbeam introducing among hearts
Retired and covert ; so that ye shall have
Clear images before your gladdened eyes
Of nature's unambitious underwood,
And flowers that prosper in the shade. And when
I speak of such among my flock as swerved
Or fell, those only shall be singled out
Upon whose laps, or error, something more
Than brotherly forgiveness may attend ;
To such will we restrict our notice, else
Better my tongue were mute.

And yet there are,
I feel, good reasons why we should not leave
Wholly untraced a more forbidding way.
For, strength to preserve and to support,
And energy to conquer and repel—
These elements of virtue, that declare

The native grandeur of the human soul—
Are oft-times not unprofitably shown
In the perverseness of a selfish course :
Truth every day exemplified, no less
In the grey cottage by the murmuring stream
Than in fantastic conqueror's roving camp,
Or mid the factious senate unappalled
Whoe'er may sink, or rise—to sink again,
As merciless proscription ebbs and flows.

"There," said the Vicar, pointing as he spake,
"A woman rests in peace ; surpassed by few
In power of mind, and eloquent discourse.
Tall was her stature ; her complexion dark
And saturnine ; her head not raised to hold
Converse with heaven, nor yet depressed towards
earth,
But in projection carried, as she walked
For ever musing. Sunken were her eyes ;
Wrinkled and furrowed with habitual thought
Was her broad forehead ; like the brow of one
Whose visual nerve shrinks from a painful glare
Of overpowering light.—While yet a child,
She, 'mid the humble flowerets of the vale,
Towered like the imperial thistle, not unfurnished
With its appropriate grace, yet rather seeking
To be admired, than coveted and loved.
Even at that age she ruled, a sovereign queen,
Over her comrades ; else their simple sports,
Wanting all relish for her strenuous mind,
Had crossed her only to be shunned with scorn.
—Oh ! pang of sorrowful regret for those
Whom, in their youth, sweet study has enthralled,

That they have lived for harsher servitude,
Whether in soul, in body, or estate !
Such doom was hers ; yet nothing could subdue
Her keen desire of knowledge, nor efface
Those brighter images by books imprest
Upon her memory, faithfully as stars
That occupy their places, and, though oft
Hidden by clouds, and oft bedimmed by haze,
Are not to be extinguished, nor impaired.

Two passions, both degenerate, for they both
Began in honor, gradually obtained
Rule over her, and vexed her daily life ;
An unremitting, avaricious thrifit ;
And a strange thraldom of maternal love,
That held her spirit, in its own despite,
Bound—by vexation, and regret, and scorn,
Constrained forgiveness, and relenting vows,
And tears, in pride suppressed, in shame concealed—
To a poor dissolute Son, her only child.
—Her wedded days had opened with mishap,
Whence dire dependence. What could she perform
To shake the burthen off ? Ah ! there was felt,
Indignantly, the weakness of her sex.
She mused, resolved, adhered to her resolve ;
The hand grew slack in alms-giving, the heart
Closed by degrees to charity ; heaven's blessing
Not seeking from that source, she placed her trust
In ceaseless pains—and strictest parsimony
Which sternly hoarded all that could be spared,
From each day's need, out of each day's least gain.

Thus all was re-established, and a pile
 Constructed, that sufficed for every end, .
 Save the contentment of the builder's mind ;
 A mind by nature indisposed to aught
 So placid, so inactive, as content ;
 A mind intolerant of lasting peace,
 And cherishing the pang her heart deplored.
 Dread life of conflict ! which I oft compared
 To the agitation of a brook that runs
 Down a rocky mountain, buried now and lost
 In silent pools, now in strong eddies chained ;
 But never to be charmed to gentleness :
 Its best attainment fits of such repose
 As timid eyes might shrink from fathoming.

A sudden illness seized her in the strength
 Of life's autumnal season.—Shall I tell
 How on her bed of death the Matron lay,
 To Providence submissive, so she thought ;
 But fretted, vexed, and wrought upon, almost
 To anger, by the malady that griped
 Her prostrate frame with unrelaxing power,
 As the fierce eagle fastens on the lamb ?
 She prayed, she moaned ;—her husband's sister
 watched
 Her dreary pillow, waited on her needs ;
 And yet the very sound of that kind foot
 Was anguish to her ears ! ‘And must she rule,’
 This was the death-doomed Woman heard to say
 In bitterness, ‘and must she rule and reign,
 ‘Sole Mistress of this house, when I am gone ?
 ‘Tend what I tended, calling it her own !’
 Enough !—I fear, too much.—One vernal evening,

While she was yet in prime of health and strength,
I well remember, while I passed her door
Alone, with loitering step, and upward eye
Turned towards the planet Jupiter that hung
Above the centre of the Vale, a voice
Roused me, her voice ; it said, 'That glorious star
'In its untroubled element will shine
'As now it shines, when we are laid in earth
'And safe from all our sorrows.' With a sigh
She spake, yet, I believe, not unsustained
By faith in glory that shall far transcend
Aught by these perishable heavens disclosed
To sight or mind. Nor less than care divine
Is divine mercy. She, who had rebelled,
Was into meekness softened and subdued ;
Did, after trials not in vain prolonged,
With resignation sink into the grave ;
And her uncharitable acts, I trust,
And harsh unkindnesses are all forgiven,
Though in this Vale, remembered with deep awe."

THE Vicar paused ; and toward a seat advanced,
A long stone seat, fixed in the Church-yard wall ;
Part shaded by cool sycamore, and part
Offering a sunny resting-place to them
Who seek the House of worship, while the bells
Yet ring with all their voices, or before
The last hath ceased its solitary knell.
Beneath the shade we all sate down ; and their
His office, unininvited, he resumed.

“ As on a sunny bank, a tender lamb
Lurks in safe shelter from the winds of March,
Screened by its parent, so that little mound
Lies guarded by its neighbor ; the small heap
Speaks for itself ; an Infant there doth rest ;
The sheltering hillock is the Mother’s grave.
If mild discourse, and manners that conferred
A natural dignity on humblest rank ;
If gladsome spirits, and benignant looks,
That for a face not beautiful did more
Than beauty for the fairest face can do ;
And if religious tenderness of heart,
Grieving for sin, and penitential tears
Shed when the clouds had gathered and distained
The spotless ether of a maiden life ;
If these may make a hallowed spot of earth
More holy in the sight of God or man ;
Then, o’er that mould, a sanctity shall brood
Till the stars sicken at the day of doom.

Ah ! what a warning for a thoughtless man,
Could field or grove, could any spot of earth,
Show to his eye an image of the pangs
Which it hath witnessed ; render back an echo
Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod !
There, by her innocent Baby’s precious grave,
And on the very turf that roofs her own,
The Mother oft was seen to stand, or kneel
In the broad day, a weeping Magdalene.
Now she is not ; the swelling turf reports
Of the fresh shower, but of poor Ellen’s tears
Is silent ; nor is any vestige left
Of the path worn by mournful tread of her

Who, at her heart's light bidding, once had moved
In virgin fearlessness, with step that seemed
Caught from the pressure of elastic turf
Upon the mountains gemmed with morning dew,
In the prime hour of sweetest scents and airs.
—Serious and thoughtful was her mind ; and yet,
By reconcilement exquisite and rare,
The form, port, motions, of this Cottage-girl
Were such as might have quickened and inspired
A Titian's hand, address to picture forth
Oread or Dryad glancing through the shade
What time the hunter's earliest horn is heard
Startling the golden hills.

A wide-spread elm
Stands in our valley, named THE JOYFUL TREE ;
From dateless usage which our peasants hold
Of giving welcome to the first of May
By dances round its trunk.—And if the sky
Permit, like honors, dance and song, are paid
To the Twelfth Night, beneath the frosty stars
'Or the clear moon. The queen of these gay sports,
If not in beauty, yet in sprightly air,
Was hapless Ellen.—No one touched the ground
So deftly, and the nicest maiden's locks
Less gracefully were braided ;—but this praise,
Methinks would better suit another place.

She loved, and fondly deemed herself beloved.
—The road is dim, the current unperceived,
The weakness painful and most pitiful,
By which a virtuous woman, in pure youth,
May be delivered to distress and shame.
Such fate was hers.—The last time Ellen danced,

Among her equals, round THE JOYFUL TREE,
She bore a secret burthen; and full soon
Was left to tremble for a breaking vow,—
Then, to bewail a sternly-broken vow,
Alone, within her widowed Mother's house.
It was the season of unfolding leaves,
Of days advancing toward their utmost length,
And small birds singing happily to mates
Happy as they. With spirit-saddening power
Winds pipe through fading woods; but those blithe
notes

Strike the deserted to the heart; I speak
Of what I know, and what we feel within.
—Beside the cottage in which Ellen dwelt
Stands a tall ash-tree; to whose topmost twig
A thrush resorts, and annually chants,
At morn and evening from that naked perch,
While all the undergrove is thick with leaves,
A time-beguiling ditty, for delight
Of his fond partner, silent in the nest.
—‘ Ah why,’ said Ellen, sighing to herself,
‘ Why do not words, and kiss, and solemn pledge;
‘ And nature that is kind in woman’s breast,
‘ And reason that in man is wise and good,
‘ And fear of him who is a righteous judge;
‘ Why do not these prevail for human life,
‘ To keep two hearts together, that began
‘ Their spring-time with one love, and that have need
‘ Of mutual pity and forgiveness, sweet
‘ To grant, or be received; while that poor bird—
‘ O come and hear him! Thou who hast to me
‘ Been faithless, hear him, though a lovely creature,
‘ One of God’s simplest children that yet know not

- The universal Parent, how he sings
- As if he wished the firmament of heaven
- Should listen, and give back to him the voice
- Of his triumphant constancy and love;
- The proclamation that he makes, how far
- His darkness doth transcend our fickle light!

Such was the tender passage, not by me
Repeated without loss of simple phrase,
Which I perused, even as the words had been
Committed by forsaken Ellen's hand
To the blank margin of a Valentine,
Bedropped with tears. 'T will please you to be told
That, studiously withdrawing from the eye
Of all companionship, the Sufferer yet
In lonely reading found a meek resource :
How thankful for the warmth of summer days,
When she could slip into the cottage-barn,
And find a secret oratory there ;
Or, in the garden, under friendly veil
Of their long twilight, pore upon her book
By the last lingering help of the open sky
Until dark night dismissed her to her bed !
Thus did a waking fancy sometimes lose
The unconquerable pang of despised love.

A kindlier passion opened on her soul
When that poor Child was born. Upon its face
She gazed as on a pure and spotless gift
Of unexpected promise, where a grief
Or dread was all that had been thought of,—joy
Far livelier than bewildered traveller feels,
Amid a perilous waste that all night long

Hath harassed him toiling through fearful storm,
When he beholds the first pale speck serene
Of day-spring, in the gloomy east, revealed
And greets it with thanksgiving. 'Till this hour,'
Thus, in her Mother's hearing Ellen spake,
'There was a stony region in my heart;
'But he, at whose command the parchèd rock
'Was smitten, and poured forth a quenching stream,
'Hath softened that obduracy, and made
'Unlooked-for gladness in the desert place,
'To save the perishing; and, henceforth, I breathe
'The air with cheerful spirit, for thy sake
'My Infant! and for that good Mother dear,
'Who bore me; and hath prayed for me in vain;—
'Yet not in vain; it shall not be in vain.'
She spake, nor was the assurance unfulfilled;
And if heart-rending thoughts would oft return,
They stayed not long.—The blameless Infant grew;
The Child whom Ellen and her Mother loved
They soon were proud of; tended it and nursed;
A soothing comforter, although forlorn;
Like a poor singing-bird from distant lands;
Or a choice shrub, which he, who passes by
With vacant mind, not seldom may observe
Fair-flowering in a thinly-peopled house,
Whose window, somewhat sadly, it adorns.

Through four months' space the Infant drew its
food
From the maternal breast; then scruples rose;
Thoughts, which the rich are free from, came and
crossed
The fond affection. She no more could bear

By her offence to lay a twofold weight
On a kind parent willing to forget
Their slender means ; so, to that parent's care
Trusting her child, she left their common home,
And undertook with dutiful content
A Foster-mother's office.

"T is, perchance,
Unknown to you, that in these simple vales
The natural feeling of equality
Is by domestic service unimpaired ;
Yet, though such service be, with us, removed
From sense of degradation, not the less
The ungentle mind can easily find means
To impose severe restraints and laws unjust,
Which hapless Ellen now was doomed to feel :
For (blinded by an over-anxious dread
Of such excitement and divided thought
As with her office would but ill accord)
The pair, whose infant she was bound to nurse,
Forbad her all communion with her own :
Week after week, the mandate they enforced.
—So near ! yet not allowed, upon that sight
To fix her eyes—alas ! 't was hard to bear !
But worse affliction must be borne—far worse ;
For 't is Heaven's will—that, after a disease
Begun and ended within three days' space,
Her child should die ; as Ellen now exclaimed,
Her own—deserted child !—Once, only once,
She saw it in that mortal malady ;
And, on the burial-day, could scarcely gain
Permission to attend its obsequies.
She reached the house, last of the funeral train ;
And some one, as she entered, having chanced

To urge unthinkingly their prompt departure,
 'Nay,' said she, with commanding look, a spirit
 Of anger never seen in her before,
 'Nay, you must wait my time!' and down she sate,
 And by the unclosed coffin kept her seat
 Weeping and looking, looking on and weeping,
 Upon the last sweet slumber of her Child,
 Until at length her soul was satisfied.

You see the Infant's Grave ; and to this spot,
 The Mother, oft as she was sent abroad,
 On whatsoever errand, urged her steps :
 Hither she came ; here stood, and sometimes knelt
 In the broad day, a rueful Magdalene !
 So call her ; for not only she bewailed
 A mother's loss, but mourned in bitterness
 Her own transgression ; penitent sincere
 As ever raised to heaven a streaming eye !
 —At length the parents of the foster-child,
 Noting that in despite of their commands
 She still renewed and could not but renew
 Those visitations, ceased to send her forth ;
 Or, to the garden's narrow bounds, confined.
 I failed not to remind them that they erred ;
 For holy Nature might not thus be crossed,
 Thus wronged in woman's breast : in vain I pleaded—
 But the green stalk of Ellen's life was snapped,
 And the flower drooped ; as every eye could see,
 It hung its head in mortal languishment.
 —Aided by this appearance, I at length
 Prevailed ; and, from those bonds released, she went
 Home to her mother's house.

The Youth was fled ;
The rash betrayer could not face the shame
Or sorrow which his senseless guilt had caused ;
And little would his presence, or proof given
Of a relenting soul, have now availed ;
For, like a shadow, he was passed away
From Ellen's thoughts ; had perished to her mind
For all concerns of fear, or hope, or love,
Save only those which to their common shame,
And to his moral being appertained :
Hope from that quarter would, I know, have brought
A heavenly comfort ; there she recognised
An unrelaxing bond, a mutual need ;
There, and, as seemed, there only.

She had built,
Her fond maternal heart had built, a nest
In blindness all too near the river's edge ;
That work a summer flood with hasty swell
Had swept away ; and now her Spirit longed
For its last flight to heaven's security.
—The bodily frame wasted from day to day ;
Meanwhile, relinquishing all other cares,
Her mind she strictly tutored to find peace
And pleasure in endurance. Much she thought,
And much she read ; and brooded feelingly
Upon her own unworthiness. To me,
As to a spiritual comforter and friend,
Her heart she opened ; and no pains were spared
To mitigate, as gently as I could,
The sting of self-reproach, with healing words.
Meek Saint ! through patience glorified on earth !
In whom, as by her lonely hearth she sate,
The ghastly face of cold decay put on

A sun-like beauty, and appeared divine !
 May I not mention—that, within those walls,
 In due observance of her pious wish,
 The congregation joined with me in prayer
 For her soul's good ? Nor was that office vain.
 —Much did she suffer : but, if any friend,
 Beholding her condition, at the sight
 Gave way to words of pity or complaint,
 She stilled them with a prompt reproof, and said,
 ‘He who afflicts me knows what I can bear ;
 ‘And, when I fail, and can endure no more,
 ‘Will mercifully take me to himself.’
 So, through the cloud of death, her spirit passed
 Into that pure and unknown world of love
 Where injury cannot come :—and here is laid
 The mortal Body by her Infant’s side.”

The Vicar ceased ; and downcast looks made known
 That each had listened with his inmost heart.
 For me, the emotion scarcely was less strong
 Or less benign than that which I had felt
 When seated near my venerable Friend,
 Under those shady elms, from him I heard
 The story that retraced the slow decline
 Of Margaret, sinking on the lonely heath
 With the neglected house to which she clung.
 —I noted that the Solitary’s cheek
 Confessed the power of nature.—Pleased though sad,
 More pleased than sad, the grey-haired Wanderer sate ;
 Thanks to his pure imaginative soul
 Capacious and serene ; his blameless life,
 His knowledge, wisdom, love of truth, and love

Of human kind ! He was it who first broke
The pensive silence, saying :—

“ Blest are they
Whose sorrow rather is to suffer wrong
Than to do wrong, albeit themselves have erred.
This tale gives proof that Heaven most gently deals
With such, in their affliction.—Ellen’s fate,
Her tender spirit and her contrite heart,
Call to my mind dark hints which I have heard
Of one who died within this vale, by doom
Heavier, as his offence was heavier far.
Where, Sir, I pray you, where are laid the bones
Of Wilfred Armathwaite ?”

The Vicar answered,
“ In that green nook, close by the Church-yard wall,
Beneath yon hawthorn, planted by myself
In memory and for warning, and in sign
Of sweetness where dire anguish had been known,
Of reconciliation after deep offence—
There doth he rest. No theme his fate supplies
For the smooth glozings of the indulgent world ;
Nor need the windings of his devious course
Be here retraced ; enough that, by mishap
And venial error, robbed of competence,
And her obsequious shadow, peace of mind,
He craved a substitute in troubled joy ;
Against his conscience rose in arms, and, braving
Divine displeasure, broke the marriage-vow.
That which he had been weak enough to do
Was misery in remembrance ; he was stung,
Stung by his inward thoughts, and by the smiles
Of wife and children stung to agony.
Wretched at home, he gained no peace abroad ;

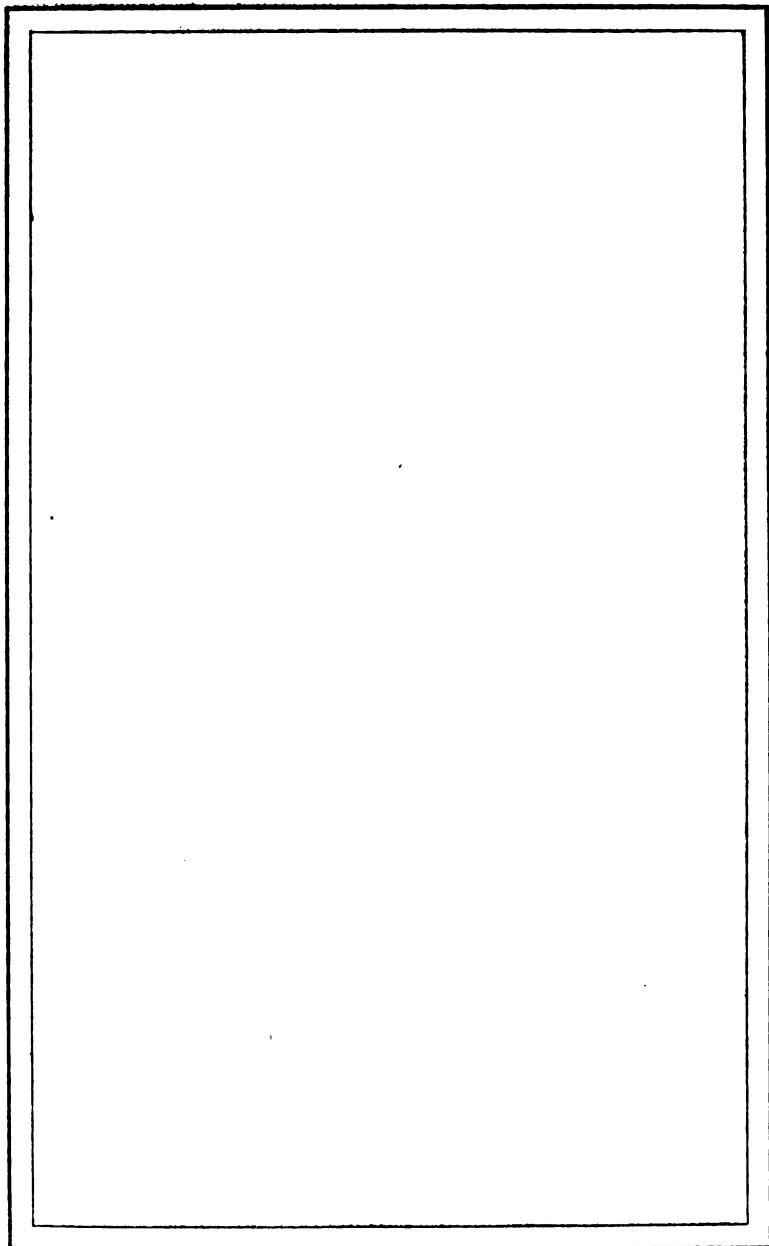
Ranged through the mountains, slept upon the earth,
 Asked comfort of the open air, and found
 No quiet in the darkness of the night,
 No pleasure in the beauty of the day.
 His flocks he slighted : his paternal fields
 Became a clog to him, whose spirit wished
 To fly—but whither ! And this gracious Church,
 That wears a look so full of peace and hope
 And love, benignant mother of the vale,
 How fair amid her brood of cottages !
 She was to him a sickness and reproach.
 Much to the last remained unknown : but this
 Is sure, that through remorse and grief he died ;
 Though pitied among men, absolved by God,
 He could not find forgiveness in himself ;
 Nor could endure the weight of his own shame.

Here rests a Mother. But from her I turn
 And from her grave.—Behold—upon that ridge,
 That, stretching boldly from the mountain side,
 Carries into the centre of the vale
 Its rocks and woods—the Cottage where she dwelt ;
 And where yet dwells her faithful Partner, left
 (Full eight years past) the solitary prop
 Of many helpless Children. I begin
 With words that might be prelude to a tale
 Of sorrow and dejection ; but I feel
 No sadness, when I think of what mine eyes
 See daily in that happy family.
 —Bright garland form they for the pensive brow
 Of their undrooping Father's widowhood,
 Those six fair Daughters, budding yet—not one,
 Not one of all the band, a full-blown flower.

Deprest, and desolate of soul, as once
That Father was, and filled with anxious fear,
Now, by experience taught, he stands assured,
That God, who takes away, yet takes not half
Of what he seems to take ; or gives it back,
Not to our prayer, but far beyond our prayer ;
He gives it—the boon produce of a soil
Which our endeavors have refused to till,
And hope hath never watered. The Abode,
Whose grateful owner can attest these truths,
Even were the object nearer to our sight,
Would seem in no distinction to surpass
The rudest habitations. Ye might think
That it had sprung self-raised from earth, or grown
Out of the living rock, to be adorned
By nature only ; but, if thither led,
Ye would discover, then, a studious work
Of many fancies, prompting many hands.

Brought from the woods the honeysuckle twines
Around the porch, and seems, in that trim place,
A plant no longer wild ; the cultured rose
There blossoms, strong in health, and will be soon
Roof-high ; the wild pink crowns the garden-wall,
And with the flowers are intermingled stones
Sparry and bright, rough scatterings of the hills.
These ornaments, that fade not with the year,
A hardy Girl continues to provide ;
Who, mounting fearlessly the rocky heights,
Her Father's prompt attendant, does for him
All that a boy could do, but with delight
More keen and prouder daring ; yet hath she,
Within the garden, like the rest, a bed

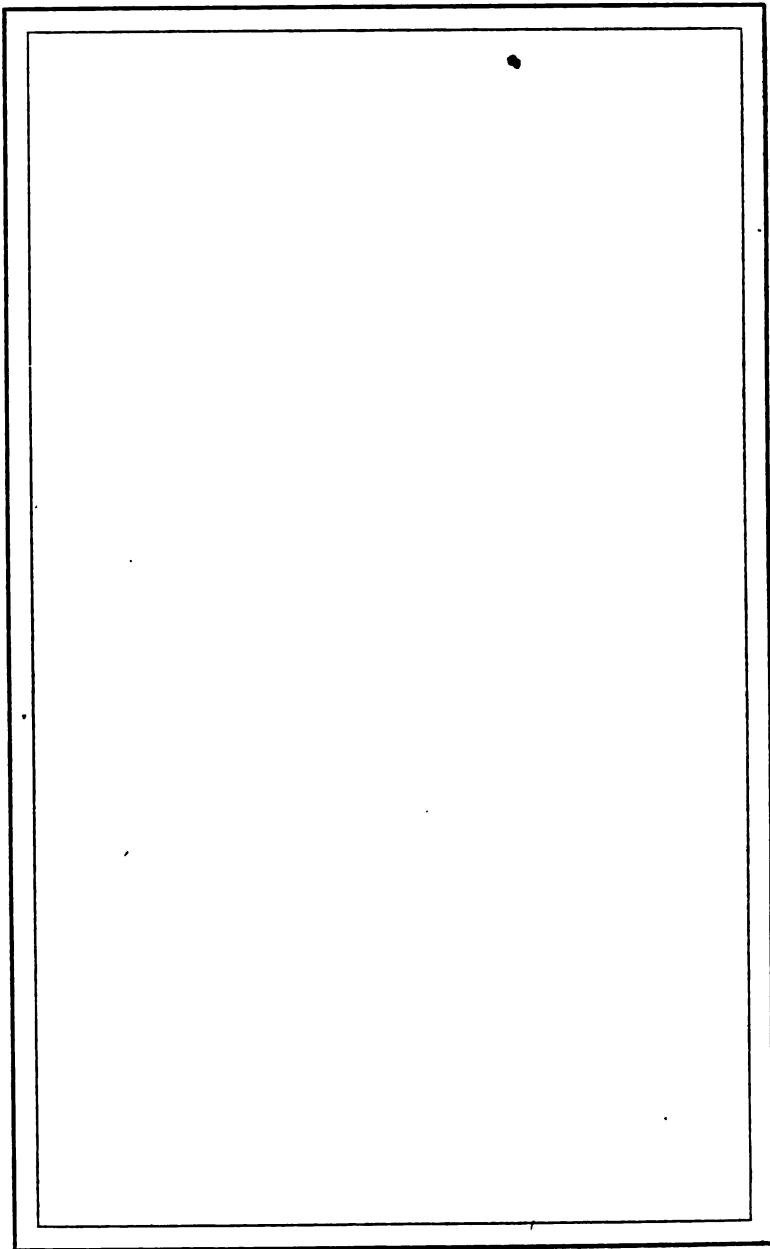
For her own flowers and favorite herbs, a space,
By sacred charter, holden for her use.
—These, and whatever else the garden bears
Of fruit or flower, permission asked or not,
I freely gather ; and my leisure draws
A not unfrequent pastime from the hum
Of bees around their range of sheltered hives
Busy in that enclosure ; while the rill,
That sparkling thrids the rocks, attunes his voice
To the pure course of human life which there
Flows on in solitude. But, when the gloom
Of night is falling round my steps, then most
This Dwelling charms me ; often I stop short,
(Who could refrain ?) and feed by stealth my sight
With prospect of the company within,
Laid open through the blazing window :—there
I see the eldest Daughter at her wheel
Spinning amain, as if to overtake
The never-halting time ; or, in her turn,
Teaching some Novice of the sisterhood
That skill in this or other household work,
Which, from her Father's honored hand, herself,
While she was yet a little-one, had learned.
Mild man ! he is not gay, but they are gay ;
And the whole house seems filled with gaiety.
—Thrice happy, then, the Mother may be deemed,
The Wife, from whose consolatory grave
I turned, that ye in mind might witness where,
And how, her Spirit yet survives on earth !”



THE EXCURSION.

BOOK SEVENTH.

THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE
MOUNTAINS.



THE CHURCH-YARD AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.

CONTINUED.

ARGUMENT.

Impression of these Narratives upon the Author's mind.—Pastor invited to give account of certain Graves that lie apart.—Clergyman and his Family.—Fortunate influence of change of situation.—Activity in extreme old age.—Another Clergyman, a character of resolute Virtue.—Lamentations over mis-directed applause.—Instance of less exalted excellence in a deaf man.—Elevated character of a blind man.—Reflections upon Blindness.—Interrupted by a Peasant who passes—his animal cheerfulness and careless vivacity.—He occasions a digression on the fall of beautiful and interesting Trees.—A female Infant's Grave.—Joy at her Birth.—Sorrow at her Departure.—A youthful Peasant—his patriotic enthusiasm and distinguished qualities—his untimely death.—Exultation of the Wanderer, as a patriot, in this Picture.—Solitary how affected.—Monument of a Knight.—Traditions concerning him.—Peroration of the Wanderer on the transitoriness of things and the revolutions of society.—Hints at his own past Calling.—Thanks the Pastor.

WHILE thus from theme to theme the Historian passed,

The words he uttered, and the scene that lay
Before our eyes, awakened in my mind
Vivid remembrance of those long-past hours ;
When, in the hollow of some shadowy vale,
(What time the splendor of the setting sun
Lay beautiful on Snowdon's sovereign brow,
On Cader Idris, or huge Penmanmaur)
A wandering Youth, I listened with delight

To pastoral melody or warlike air,
Drawn from the chords of the ancient British harp
By some accomplished Master, while he sate
Amid the quiet of the green recess,
And there did inexhaustibly dispense
An interchange of soft or solemn tunes.
Tender or blithe; now, as the varying mood
Of his own spirit urged,—now, as a voice
From youth or maiden, or some honored chief
Of his compatriot villagers (that hung
Around him, drinking in the impassioned notes
Of the time-hallowed minstrelsy) required
For their heart's ease or pleasure. Strains of power
Were they, to seize and occupy the sense;
But to a higher mark than song can reach
Rose this pure eloquence. And, when the stream
Which overflowed the soul was passed away,
A consciousness remained that it had left,
Deposited upon the silent shore
Of memory, images and precious thoughts,
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.

“These grassy heaps lie amicably close,”
Said I, “like surges heaving in the wind
Along the surface of the mountain pool:
Whence comes it, then, that yonder we behold
Five graves, and only five, that rise together
Unsociably sequestered, and encroaching
On the smooth play-ground of the village-school!”

The Vicar answered,—“No disdainful pride
In them who rest beneath, nor any course
Of Strange or tragic accident, hath helped

To place those hillocks in that lonely guise.
—Once more look forth, and follow with your sight
The length of road that from yon mountain's base
Through bare enclosures stretches, 'till its line
Is lost within a little tuft of trees ;
Then, reappearing in a moment, quits
The cultured fields ; and up the heathy waste,
Mounts, as you see, in mazes serpentine,
Led towards an easy outlet of the vale.
That little shady spot, that sylvan tuft,
By which the road is hidden, also hides
A cottage from our view ; though I discern
(Ye scarcely can) amid its sheltered trees
The smokeless chimney-top.—

All unembowered
And naked stood that lowly Parsonage
(For such in truth it is, and appertains
To a small Chapel in the vale beyond)
When hither came its last Inhabitant.
Rough and forbidding were the choicest roads
By which our northern wilds could then be crossed
And unto most of these secluded vales
Was no access for wain, heavy or light.
So, at his dwelling-place the Priest arrived
With store of household goods, in panniers slung
On sturdy horses graced with jingling bells,
And on the back of more ignoble beast ;
That, with like burthen of effects most prized
Or easiest carried, closed the motley train.
Young was I then, a school-boy of eight years ;
But still, methinks, I see them as they passed
In order, drawing toward their wished-for home.
—Rocked by the motion of a trusty ass

Two ruddy children hung, a well-poised freight,
Each in his basket nodding drowsily ;
Their bonnets, I remember, wreathed with flowers,
Which told it was the pleasant month of June ;
And, close behind, the comely Matron rode,
A woman of soft speech and gracious smile,
And with a lady's mien.—From far they came,
Even from Northumbrian hills ; yet theirs had been
A merry journey, rich in pastime, cheered
By music, prank, and laughter-stirring jest ;
And freak put on, and arch word dropped—to swell
The cloud of fancy and uncouth surmise
That gathered round the slowly-moving train.
—‘ Whence do they come ? and what their errand
charged ?
‘ Belong they to the fortune-telling tribe
‘ Who pitch their tents under the green-wood tree ?
‘ Or Strollers are they, furnished to enact
‘ Fair Rosamond, and the Children of the Wood,
‘ And, by that whiskered tabby’s aid, set forth
‘ The lucky venture of sage Whittington,
‘ When the next village hears the show announced
‘ By blast of trumpet ?’ Plenteous was the growth
Of such conjectures, overheard, or seen
On many a staring countenance portrayed
Of boor or burgher, as they marched along.
And more than once their steadiness of face
Was put to proof, and exercise supplied
To their inventive humor, by stern looks,
And questions in authoritative tone,
From some staid guardian of the public peace,
Checking the sober steed on which he rode,
In his suspicious wisdom ; oftener still,

By notice indirect, or blunt demand
From traveller halting in his own despite,
A simple curiosity to ease :
Of which adventures, that beguiled and cheered
Their grave migration, the boon pair would tell,
With undiminished glee, in hoary age.

A Priest he was by function ; but his course
From his youth up, and high as manhood's noon,
(The hour of life to which he then was brought)
Had been irregular, I might say, wild ;
By books unstudied, by his pastoral care
Too little checked. An active, ardent mind ;
A fancy pregnant with resource and scheme
To cheat the sadness of a rainy day ;
Hands apt for all ingenious arts and games ;
A generous spirit, and a body strong
To cope with stoutest champions of the bowl ;
Had earned for him sure welcome, and the rights
Of a prized visitant, in the jolly hall
Of country 'squire ; or at the statelier board
Of duke or earl, from scenes of courtly pomp
Withdrawn,—to wile away the summer hours
In condescension among rural guests.

With these high comrades he had revelled long,
Frolicking industriously, a simple Clerk
By hopes of coming patronage beguiled
Till the heart sickened. So, each loftier aim
Abandoning and all his showy friends,
For a life's stay (slender it was, but sure)
He turned to this secluded chapelry ;
That had been offered to his doubtful choice

By an unthought-of patron. Bleak and bare
They found the cottage, their allotted home;
Naked without, and rude within; a spot
With which the Cure not long had been endowed:
And far remote the chapel stood,—remote,
And, from his Dwelling, unapproachable,
Save through a gap high in the hills, an opening
Shadeless and shelterless, by driving showers
Frequented, and beset with howling winds.
Yet cause was none, whate'er regret might hang
On his own mind, to quarrel with the choice
Or the necessity that fixed him here;
Apart from old temptations, and constrained
To punctual labor in his sacred charge.
See him a constant preacher to the poor!
And visiting, though not with saintly zeal,
Yet, when need was, with no reluctant will,
The sick in body, or distrest in mind;
And by as salutary change, compelled
To rise from timely sleep, and meet the day
With no engagement, in his thoughts, more proud
Or splendid than his garden could afford,
His fields, or mountains by the heath-cock ranged,
Or the wild brooks; from which he now returned
Contented to partake the quiet meal
Of his own board, where sat his gentle Mate
And three fair Children, plentifully fed
Though simply, from their little household farm;
Nor wanted timely treat of fish or fowl
By nature yielded to his practised hand;—
To help the small but certain comings-in
Of that spare benefice. Yet not the less
Theirs was a hospitable board, and theirs
A charitable door.

So days and years
 Passed on ;—the inside of that rugged house
 Was trimmed and brightened by the Matron's care,
 And gradually enriched with things of price,
 Which might be lacked for use or ornament.
 What, though no soft and costly sofa there
 Insidiously stretched out its lazy length,
 And no vain mirror glittered upon the walls,
 Yet were the windows of the low abode
 By shutters weather-fended, which at once
 Repelled the storm and deadened its loud roar.
 There snow-white curtains hung in decent folds ;
 Tough moss, and long-enduring mountain plants,
 That creep along the ground with sinuous trail,
 Were nicely braided ; and composed a work
 Like Indian mats, that with appropriate grace
 Lay at the threshold and the inner doors ;
 And a fair carpet, woven of homespun wool
 But tinctured daintily with florid hues,
 For seemliness and warmth, on festal days,
 Covered the smooth blue slabs of mountain-stone
 With which the parlor-floor, in simplest guise
 Of pastoral homesteads, had been long inlaid.

These pleasing works the Housewife's skill produced :

Meanwhile the unsedentary Master's hand
 Was busier with his task—to rid, to plant,
 To rear for food, for shelter, and delight ;
 A thriving covert ! And when wishes, formed
 In youth, and sanctioned by the riper mind,
 Restored me to my native valley, here
 To end my days ; well pleased was I to see

The once-bare cottage, on the mountain-side,
Screen'd from assault of every bitter blast ;
While the dark shadows of the summer leaves
Danced in the breeze, chequering its mossy roof.
Time, which had thus afforded willing help
To beautify with Nature's fairest growths
This rustic tenement, had gently shed,
Upon its Master's frame, a wintry grace ;
The comeliness of umenfeebled age.

But how could I say, gently ? for he still
Retained a flashing eye, a burning palm,
A stirring foot, a head which beat at nights
Upon its pillow with a thousand schemes.
Few likings had he dropped, few pleasures lost ;
Generous and charitable, prompt to serve ;
And still his harsher passions kept their hold—
Anger and indignation. Still he loved
The sound of titled names, and talked in glee
Of long-past banqueting with high-born friends :
Then, from those lulling fits of vain delight
Uproused by recollect'd injury, railed
At their false ways disdainfully,—and oft
In bitterness and with a threatening eye
Of fire, incensed beneath its hoary brow.
—Those transports, with staid looks of pure good-will,
And with soft smile, his consort would reprove.
She, far behind him in the race of years,
Yet keeping her first mildness, was advanced
Far nearer, in the habit of her soul,
To that still region whither all are bound.
Him might we liken to the setting sun

As seen not seldom on some gusty day,
Struggling and bold, and shining from the west
With an inconstant and unmellowed light ;
She was a soft attendant cloud, that hung
As if with wish to veil the restless orb ;
From which it did itself imbibe a ray
Of pleasing lustre.—But no more of this ;
I better love to sprinkle on the sod
That now divides the pair, or rather say,
That still unites them, praises, like heaven's dew,
Without reserve descending upon both.

Our very first in eminence of years
This old Man stood, the patriarch of the Vale !
And, to his unmolested mansion, death
Had never come, through space of forty years ;
Sparing both old and young in that abode.
Suddenly then they disappeared : not twice
Had summer scorched the fields ; not twice had
fallen

On those high peaks, the first autumnal snow,
Before the greedy visiting was closed,
And the long-privileged house left empty—swept
As by a plague. Yet no rapacious plague
Had been among them ; all was gentle death,
One after one, with intervals of peace.
A happy consummation ! an accord
Sweet, perfect, to be wished for ! save that here
Was something which to mortal sense might sound
Like harshness,—that the old grey-headed Sire,
The oldest, he was taken last, survived
When the meek Partner of his age, his Son,

His Daughter, and that late and high-prized gift,
His little smiling Grandchild, were no more.

‘ All gone, all vanished ! he deprived and bare,
‘ How will he face the remnant of his life ?
‘ What will become of him ?’ we said, and mused
In sad conjectures—‘ Shall we meet him now
‘ Haunting with rod and line the craggy brooks ?
‘ Or shall we overhear him, as we pass,
‘ Striving to entertain the lonly hours
‘ With music ?’ (for he had not ceased to touch
The harp or viol which himself had framed,
For their sweet purposes, with perfect skill.)
‘ What titles will he keep ? will he remain
‘ Musician, gardener, builder, mechanist,
‘ A planter, and a rarer from the seed ?
‘ A man of hope and forward-looking mind
‘ Even to the last !—Such was he, unsubdued.
But Heaven was gracious ; yet a little while,
And this Survivor, with his cheerful throng
Of open projects, and his inward hoard
Of unsunned griefs, too many and too keen,
Was overcome by unexpected sleep,
In one blest moment. Like a shadow thrown
Softly and lightly from a passing cloud,
Death fell upon him, while reclined he lay
For noontide solace on the summer grass,
The warm lap of his mother earth : and so,
Their lenient term of separation past,
That family (whose graves you there behold)
By yet a higher privilege once more
Were gathered to each other.”

Calm of mind

And silence waited on these closing words ;
Until the Wanderer (whether moved by fear
Lest in those passages of life were some
That might have touched the sick heart of his Friend
Too nearly, or intent to reinforce
His own firm spirit in degree deprest
By tender sorrow for our mortal state)
Thus silence broke :—“ Behold a thoughtless Man
From vice and premature decay preserved
By useful habits, to a fitter soil
Transplanted ere too late.—The hermit, lodged
Amid the untrodden desert, tells his beads,
With each repeating its allotted prayer,
And thus divides and thus relieves the time ;
Smooth task, with his compared, whose mind could
string,

{ Not scantily, bright minutes on the thread
Of keen domestic anguish ; and beguile
A solitude, unchosen, unprofessed ;
Till gentlest death released him. }

Far from us

Be the desire—too curiously to ask
How much of this is but the blind result
Of cordial spirits and vital temperament,
And what to higher powers is justly due.
But you, Sir, know that in a neighboring vale
A Priest abides before whose life such doubts
Fall to the ground ; whose gifts of nature lie
Retired from notice, lost in attributes
Of reason, honorably effaced by debts
Which her poor treasure-house is content to owe,
And conquests over her dominion gained,

To which her forwardness must needs submit.
In this one Man is shown a temperance—proof
Against all trials ; industry severe
And constant as the motion of the day ;
Stern self-denial round him spread, with shade
That might be deemed forbidding, did not there
All generous feelings flourish and rejoice ;
Forbearance, charity in deed and thought,
And resolution competent to take
Out of the bosom of simplicity . . .
All that her holy customs recommend,
And the best ages of the world prescribe.
—Preaching, administering, in every work
Of his sublime vocation, in the walks
Of worldly intercourse between man and man,
And in his humble dwelling, he appears
A laborer, with moral virtue girt,
With spiritual graces, like a glory, crowned."

"Doubt can be none," the Pastor said, "for whom
This portraiture is sketched. The great, the good,
The well-beloved, the fortunate, the wise,—
These titles emperors and chiefs have borne,
Honor assumed or given : and him, the WONDERFUL,
Our simple shepherds, speaking from the heart,
Deservedly have styled.—From his abode
In a dependent chapelry that lies
Behind yon hill, a poor and rugged wild,
Which in his soul he lovingly embraced,
And, having once espoused, would never quit ;
Into its graveyard will ere long be borne
That lowly, great, good Man. A simple stone
May cover him ; and by its help, perchance,

A century shall hear his name pronounced,
With images attendant on the sound ;
Then, shall the slowly-gathering twilight close
In utter night ; and of his course remain
No cognizable vestiges, no more
Than of this breath, which shapes itself in words
To speak of him, and instantly dissolves."

The Pastor pressed by thoughts which round his theme

Still linger'd, after a brief pause, resumed ;
" Noise is there not enough in doleful war,
But that the heaven-born poet must stand forth,
And lend the echoes of his sacred shell,
To multiply and aggravate the din ?
Pangs are there not enough in hopeless love—
And, in requited passion, all too much
Of turbulence, anxiety, and fear—
But that the minstrel of the rural shade
Must tune his pipe, insidiously to nurse
The perturbation in the suffering breast,
And propagate its kind, far as he may ?
—Ah who (and with such rapture as befits
The hallowed theme) will rise and celebrate
The good man's purposes and deeds ; retrace
His struggles, his discomfitures deplore,
His triumphs hail, and glorify his end ;
That virtue, like the fumes and vapoury clouds
Through fancy's heat redounding in the brain,
And like the soft infections of the heart,
By charm of measured words may spread o'er field,
Hamlet, and town ; and piety survive
Upon the lips of men in hall or bower ;

Not for reproof, but high and warm delight
And grave encouragement, by song inspired ?
—Vain thought ! but wherefore murmur or repine ?
The memory of the just survives in heaven :
And, without sorrow, will the ground receive
That venerable clay. Meanwhile the best
Of what lies here confines us to degrees
In excellence less difficult to reach,
And milder worth : nor need we travel far
From those to whom our last regards were paid,
For such example.

Almost at the root
Of that tall pine, the shadow of whose bare
And slender stem, while here I sit at eve,
Oft stretches toward me, like a long straight path
Traced faintly in the greensward ; there, beneath
A plain blue stone, a gentle Dalesman lies,
From whom, in early childhood, was withdrawn
The precious gift of hearing. He grew up
From year to year in loneliness of soul ;
And this deep mountain-valley was to him
Soundless, with all its streams. The bird of dawn
Did never rouse this Cottager from sleep
With startling summons ; not for his delight
The vernal cuckoo shouted : not for him
Murmured the laboring bee. When stormy winds
Were working the broad bosom of the lake
Into a thousand thousand sparkling waves,
Rocking the trees, or driving cloud on cloud
Along the sharp edge of yon lofty crag,
The agitated scene before his eye
Was silent as a picture : evermore
Were all things silent, whereso'er he moved.

Yet, by the solace⁹ of his own pure thoughts
 Upheld, he dutifully pursued the round
 Of rural labors ; the steep mountain-side
 Ascended, with his staff and faithful dog ;
 The plough he guided, and the scythe he swayed ;
 And the ripe corn before his sickle fell
 Among the jocund reapers. For himself,
 All watchful and industrious as he was,
 He wrought not ; neither field nor flock he owned ;
 No wish for wealth had place within his mind ;
 Nor husband's love, nor father's hope or care.

Though born a younger brother, need was none
 That from the floor of his paternal home
 He should depart, to plant himself anew
 And when, mature in manhood, he beheld
 His parents laid in earth, no loss ensued
 Of rights to him ; but he remained well pleased,
 By the pure bond of independent love,
 An inmate of a second family ;
 The fellow-laborer and friend of him
 To whom the small inheritance had fallen.
 —Nor deem that his mild presence was a weight
 That pressed upon his brother's house ; for books
 Were ready comrades whom he could not tire ;
 Of whose society the blameless Man
 Was never satiate. Their familiar voice,
 Even to old age, with unabated charm,
 Beguiled his leisure hours ; refreshed his thoughts ;
 Beyond its natural elevation raised
 His introverted spirit ; and bestowed
 Upon his life an outward dignity
 Which all acknowledged. The dark winter night,

The stormy day, each had its own resource ;
Song of the muses, sage historic tale,
Science severe, or word of holy Writ
Announcing immortality and joy
To the assembled spirits of just men
Made perfect, and from injury secure.
—Thus soothed at home, thus busy in the field,
To no perverse suspicion he gave way,
No languor, peevishness, nor vain complaint ;
And they, who were about him, did not fail
In reverence, or in courtesy ; they prized
His gentle manners : and his peaceful smiles,
The gleams of his slow-varying countenance,
Were met with answering sympathy and love.

At length, when sixty years and five were told,
A slow disease insensibly consumed
The powers of nature ; and a few short steps
Of friends and kindred bore him from his home
(Yon cottage shaded by the woody crags)
To the profounder stillness of the grave.
—Nor was his funeral denied the grace
Of many tears, virtuous and thoughtful grief ;
Heart-sorrow rendered sweet by gratitude
And now that monumental stone preserves
His name, and unambitiously relates
How long, and by what kindly outward aids,
And in what pure contentedness of mind,
The sad privation was by him endured.
—And yon tall pine-tree, whose composing sound
Was wasted on the good Man's living ear,
Hath now its own peculiar sanctity ;

And, at the touch of every wandering breeze,
Murmurs, not idly, o'er his peaceful grave.

Soul-cheering Light, most bountiful of things !
Guide of our way, mysterious comforter !
Whose sacred influence, spread through earth and
heaven,
We all too thanklessly participate,
Thy gifts were utterly withheld from him
Whose place of rest is near yon ivied porch.
Yet, of the wild brooks ask if he complained ;
Ask of the channelled rivers if they held
A safer, easier, more determined, course.
What terror doth it strike into the mind
To think of one, blind and alone, advancing
Straight toward some precipice's airy brink !
But, timely warned, *He* would have stayed his steps,
Protected, say enlightened, by his ear ;
And on the very edge of vacancy
Not more endangered than a man whose eye
Beholds the gulf beneath.—No floweret blooms
Throughout the lofty range of these rough hills,
Nor in the woods, that could from him conceal
Its birth-place ; none whose figure did not live
Upon his touch. The bowels of the earth
Enriched with knowledge his industrious mind ;
The ocean paid him tribute from the stores
Lodged in her bosom ; and, by science led,
His genius mounted to the plains of heaven.
—Methinks I see him—how his eye-balls rolled,
Beneath his ample brow, in darkness paired,—
But each instinct with spirit ; and the frame
Of the whole countenance alive with thought,

Fancy, and understanding ; while the voice
Discoursed of natural or moral truth
With eloquence, and such authentic power,
That, in his presense, humbler knowledge stood
Abashed, and tender pity overawed."

"A noble—and, to unreflecting minds,
A marvellous spectacle," the Wanderer said,
"Beings like these present ! But proof abounds
Upon the earth that faculties, which seem
Extinguished, do not, *therefore*, cease to be.
And to the mind among her powers of sense
This transfer is permitted,—not alone
That the bereft their recompense may win ;
But for remoter purposes of love
And charity ; nor last nor least for this,
That to the imagination may be given
A type and shadow of an awful truth ;
How, likewise, under sufferance divine,
Darkness is banished from the realms of death,
By man's imperishable spirit, quelled.
Unto the men who see not as we see
Futurity was thought, in ancient times,
To be laid open, and they prophesied.
And know we not that from the blind have flowed
The highest, holiest, raptures of the lyre ;
And wisdom married to immortal verse ?"

Among the humbler Worthies, at our feet
Lying insensible to human praise,
Love, or regret,—*whose* lineaments would next
Have been portrayed, I guess not ; but it chanced
That, near the quiet church-yard where we sate,

A team of horses, with a ponderous freight
 Pressing behind, adown a rugged slope,
 Whose sharp descent confounded their array,
 Came at that moment, ringing noisily.

“ Here,” said the Pastor, “ do we muse, and mourn
 The waste of death ; and lo ! the giant oak
 Stretched on his bier—that massy timber wain ;
 Nor fail to note the Man who guides the team.”

He was a peasant of the lowest class :
 Grey locks profusely round his temples hung
 In clustering curls, like ivy, which the bite
 Of winter cannot thin ; the fresh air lodged
 Within his cheek, as light within a cloud ;
 And he returned our greeting with a smile.
 When he had passed, the Solitary spake :
 “ A Man he seems of cheerful yesterdays }
 And confident to-morrows ; with a face }
 Not worldly-minded, for it bears too much
 Of Nature’s impress,—gaiety and health,
 Freedom and hope ; but keen, withal, and shrewd.
 His gestures note,—and hark ! his tones of voice
 Are all vivacious as his mien and looks.”

The Pastor answered. “ You have read him well.
 Year after year is added to his store
 With *silent* increase : summers, winters—past,
 Past or to come ; yea, boldly might I say,
 Ten summers and ten winters of a space
 That lies beyond life’s ordinary bounds,
 Upon his sprightly vigour cannot fix
 The obligation of an anxious mind,

A pride in having, or a fear to lose ;
Possessed like outskirts of some large domain,
By any one more thought of than by him
Who holds the land in fee, its careless lord !
Yet is the creature rational, endowed
With foresight ; hears, too, every Sabbath day,
The Christian promise with attentive ear ;
Nor will, I trust, the Majesty of Heaven
Reject the incense offered up by him,
Though of the kind which beasts and birds present
In grove or pasture ; cheerfulness of soul,
From trepidation and repining free.
How many scrupulous worshippers fall down
Upon their knees, and daily homage pay
Less worthy, less religious even, than his !

This qualified respect, the old Man's due,
Is paid without reluctance ; but in truth,"
(Said the good Vicar with a fond half-smile),
" I feel at times a motion of despite
Towards one, whose bold contrivances and skill,
As you have seen, bear such conspicuous part
In works of havoc ; taking from these vales,
One after one, their proudest ornaments.
Full oft his doings leave me to deplore
Tall ash-tree, sown by winds, by vapours nursed,
In the dry crannies of the pendent rocks ;
Light birch, aloft upon the horizon's edge,
A veil of glory for the ascending moon ;
And oak whose roots by noontide dew were damped,
And on whose forehead inaccessible
The raven lodged in safety.—Many a ship
Launched into Morecam-bay, to *him* hath owed

Her strong knee-timbers, and the mast that bears
The loftiest of her pendants ; He, from park
Or forest, fetched the enormous axle-tree
That whirls (how slow itself !) ten thousand spindles :
And the vast engine laboring in the mine,
Content with meaner prowess, must have lacked
The trunk and body of its marvellous strength,
If his undaunted enterprise had failed
Among the mountain coves.

Yon household fir,
A guardian planted to fence off the blast,
But towering high the roof above, as if
Its humble destination were forgot—
That sycamore, which annually holds
Within its shade, as in a stately tent
On all sides open to the fanning breeze,¹²
A grave assemblage, seated while they shear
The fleece-encumbered flock—the JOYFUL ELM,
Around whose trunk the maidens dance in May—
And the LORD's OAK—would plead their several rights
In vain, if he were master of their fate ;
His sentence to the axe would doom them all.
But, green in age, and lusty as he is,
And promising to keep his hold on earth
Less, as might seem, in rivalry with men
Than with the forest's more enduring growth,
His own appointed hour will come at last ;
And, like the haughty Spoilers of the world,
This keen Destroyer, in his turn, must fall.

Now from the living pass we once again :
From Age," the Priest continued, "turn your
thoughts;

From Age, that often unlamented drops
And marks with daisied hillock, three spans long !
—Seven lusty Sons sate daily round the board
Of Gold-rill side ; and, when the hope had ceased
Of other progeny, a Daughter then
Was given, the crowning bounty of the whole ;
And so acknowledged with a tremulous joy
Felt to the centre of that heavenly calm
With which by nature every mother's soul
Is stricken in the moment when her throes
Are ended, and her ears have heard the cry
Which tells her that a living child is born :
And she lies conscious, in a blissful rest,
That the dread storm is weathered by them both.

The Father—him at this unlooked-for gift
A bolder transport seizes. From the side
Of his bright hearth, and from his open door,
Day after day the gladness is diffused
To all that come, almost to all that pass ;
Invited, summoned, to partake the cheer
Spread on the never-empty board, and drink
Health and good wishes to his new-born girl ;
From cups replenished by his joyous hand.
—Those seven fair brothers variously were moved
Each by the thoughts best suited to his years :
But most of all, and with most thankful mind
The hoary grandsire felt himself enriched ;
A happiness that ebbed not, but remained
To fill the total measure of his soul !
—From the low tenement, his own abode,
Whither, as to a little private cell,
He had withdrawn from bustle, care, and noise,

To spend the sabbath of old age in peace,
Once every day he dutifully repaired
To rock the cradle of the slumbering babe :
For in that female infant's name he heard
The silent name of his departed wife ;
Heart-stirring music ! hourly heard that name ;
Full blest he was, ' Another Margaret Green,'
Oft did he say, ' was come to Gold-rill side.'

Oh ! pang unthought of, as the precious boon
Itself had been unlooked-for ; oh ! dire stroke
Of desolating anguish for them all !
—Just as the Child could totter on the floor,
And, by some friendly finger's help unstayed,
Range round the garden walk, while she perchance
Was catching at some novelty of spring,
Ground-flower, or glossy insect from its cell
Drawn by the sunshine—at that hopeful season
The winds of March, smiting insidiously,
Raised in the tender passage of the throat
Viewless obstruction ; whence, all unforewarned,
The household lost their pride and souls' delight.
—But time hath power to soften all regrets,
And prayer and thought can bring to worst distress
Due resignation. Therefore, though some tears
Fail not to spring from either Parent's eye
Oft as they hear of sorrow like their own,
Yet this departed Little-one, too long
The innocent troubler of their quiet, sleeps
In what may now be called a peaceful bed.

On a bright day—so calm and bright it seemed
To us, with our sad spirits, heavenly-fair—

These mountains echoed to an unknown sound;
A volley, thrice repeated o'er the Corse
Let down into the hollow of that grave,
Whose shelving sides are red with naked mould.
Ye rains of April, duly wet this earth!
Spare, burning sun of midsummer, these sods,
That they may knit together, and therewith
Our thoughts unite in kindred quietness!
Nor so the Valley shall forget her loss.
Dear Youth, by young and old alike beloved,
To me as precious as my own!—Green herbs
May creep (I wish that they would softly creep)
Over thy last abode, and we may pass
Reminded less imperiously of thee;—
The ridge itself may sink into the breast
Of earth, the great abyss, and be no more;
Yet shall not thy remembrance leave our hearts,
Thy image disappear!

The Mountain-ash

No eye can overlook, when 'mid a grove
Of yet unfaded trees she lifts her head
Decked with autumnal berries, that outshine
Spring's richest blossoms; and ye may have marked,
By a brook-side or solitary tarn,
How she her station doth adorn: the pool
Glowes at her feet, and all the gloomy rocks
Are brightened round her. In his native vale
Such and so glorious did this Youth appear;
A sight that kindled pleasure in all hearts
By his ingenuous beauty, by the gleam
Of his fair eyes, by his capacious brow,
By all the graces with which nature's hand
Had lavishly arrayed him. As old bards

Tell in their idle songs of wandering gods,
Pan or Apollo, veiled in human form :
Yet, like the sweet-breathed violet of the shade
Discovered in their own despite to sense
Of mortals (if such fables without blame
May find chance-mention on this sacred ground)
So, through a simple rustic garb's disguise,
And through the impediment of rural cares,
In him revealed a scholar's genius shone ;
And so, not wholly hidden from men's sight,
In him the spirit of a hero walked
Our unpretending valley.—How the quoit
Whizzed from the Stripling's arm ! If touched by
him,
The inglorious foot-ball mounted to the pitch
Of the lark's flight,—or shaped a rainbow curve,
Aloft, in prospect of the shouting field !
The indefatigable fox had learned
To dread his perseverance in the chase.
With admiration would he lift his eyes
To the wide-ruling eagle, and his hand
Was loth to assault the majesty he loved :
Else had the strongest fastnesses proved weak
To guard the royal brood. The sailing glead,
The wheeling swallow, and the darting snipe,
The sportive sea-gull dancing with the waves,
And cautious water-fowl, from distant climes,
Fixed at their seat, the centre of the Mere,
Were subject to young Oswald's steady aim,
And lived by his forbearance.

From the coast
Of France a boastful Tyrant hurled his threats ;
Our Country marked the preparation vast

Of hostile forces ; and she called—with voice
That filled her plains, that reached her utmost shores,
And in remotest vales was heard—to arms !
—Then, for the first time, here you might have seen
The shepherd's grey to martial scarlet changed,
That flashed uncouthly through the woods and fields.
Ten hardy Striplings, all in bright attire,
And graced with shining weapons, weekly marched,
From this lone valley, to a central spot
Where, in assemblage with the flower and choice
Of the surrounding district, they might learn
The rudiments of war ; ten—hardy, strong,
And valiant ; but young Oswald, like a chief
And yet a modest comrade, led them forth
From their shy solitude, to face the world,
With a gay confidence and seemly pride ;
Measuring the soil beneath their happy feet
Like Youths released from labor, and yet bound
To most laborious service, though to them
A festival of unincumbered ease ;
The inner spirit keeping holiday,
Like vernal ground to sabbath sunshine left.

Oft have I marked him, at some leisure hour,
Stretched on the grass, or seated in the shade,
Among his fellows, while an ample map
Before their eyes lay carefully outspread,
From which the gallant teacher would discourse,
Now pointing this way and now that.—‘Here flows,’
Thus would he say, ‘The Rhine, that famous stream !
‘Eastward, the Danube toward this inland sea,
‘A mightier river, winds from realm to realm ;
‘And, like a serpent, shows his glittering back

' Bespotted—with innumerable isles :
 ' Here reigns the Russian, there the Turk ; observe
 ' His capital city !' Thence, along a tract
 Of livelier interest to his hopes and fears,
 His finger moved, distinguishing the spots
 Where wide-spread conflict then most fiercely raged ;
 Nor left unstigmatized those fatal fields
 On which the sons of mighty Germany
 Were taught a base submission.—' Here behold
 ' A nobler race, the Switzers, and their land,
 ' Vales deeper far than these of ours, huge woods,
 ' And mountains white with everlasting snow !'
 —And, surely, he, that spake with kindling brow,
 Was a true patriot, hopeful as the best
 Of that young peasantry, who, in our days,
 Have fought and perished for Helvetia's rights—
 Ah, not in vain !—or those who, in old time,
 For work of happier issue, to the side
 Of Tell came trooping from a thousand huts,
 When he had risen alone ! No braver Youth
 Descended from Judean heights, to march
 With righteous Joshua ; nor appeared in arms
 When grove was felled, and altar was cast down,
 And Gideon blew the trumpet, soul-inflamed,
 And strong in hatred of idolatry."

The Pastor, even as if by these last words
 Raised from his seat within the chosen shade,
 Moved toward the grave ;—instinctively his steps
 We followed ; and my voice with joy exclaimed :
 " Power to the Oppressors of the world is given,
 A might of which they dream not. Oh ! the curse,
 To be the awakener of divinest thoughts,

Father and founder of exalted deeds ;
And, to whole nations bound in servile straits,
The liberal donor of capacities
More than heroic ! this to be, nor yet
Have sense of one connatural wish, nor yet
Deserve the least return of human thanks ;
Winning no recompense but deadly hate
With pity mixed, astonishment with scorn !"

When this involuntary strain had ceased,
The Pastor said : " So Providence is served ;
The fork'd weapon of the skies can send
Illumination into deep, dark holds,
Which the mild sunbeam hath not power to pierce.
Ye Thrones that have defied remorse, and cast
Pity away, soon shall ye quake with *fear* !
For, not unconscious of the mighty debt
Which to outrageous wrong the sufferer owes,
Europe, through all her habitable bounds,
Is thirsting for *their* overthrow, who yet
Survive, as pagan temples stood of yore,
By horror of their impious rites, preserved ;
Are still permitted to extend their pride,
Like cedars on the top of Lebanon
Darkening the sun.

But less impatient thoughts,
And love 'all hoping and expecting all,'
This hallowed grave demands, where rests in peace
A humble champion of the better cause ;
A Peasant-youth, so call him, for he asked
No higher name ; in whom our country showed,
As in a favorite son, most beautiful.
In spite of vice, and misery, and disease,

Spread with the spreading of her wealthy arts,
England, the ancient and the free, appeared
In him to stand before my swimming eyes,
Unconquerably virtuous and secure.
—No more of this, lest I offend his dust:
Short was his life, and a brief tale remains.

One day—a summer's day of annual pomp
And solemn chase—from morn to sultry noon
His steps had followed, fleetest of the fleet,
The red-deer driven along its native heights
With cry of hound and horn; and, from that toil
Returned with sinews weakened and relaxed,
This generous Youth, too negligent of self,
Plunged—'mid a gay and busy throng convened
To wash the fleeces of his Father's flock—
Into the chilling flood. Convulsions dire
Seized him, that self-same night; and through the
space
Of twelve ensuing days his frame was wrenched,
Till nature rested from her work in death.
To him, thus snatched away, his comrades paid
A soldier's honors. At his funeral hour
Bright was the sun, the sky a cloudless blue—
A golden lustre slept upon the hills;
And if by chance a stranger, wandering there,
From some commanding eminence had looked
Down on this spot, well pleased would he have seen
A glittering spectacle; but every face
Was pallid: seldom hath that eye been moist
With tears, that wept not then; nor were the few,
Who from their dwellings came not forth to join
In this sad service, less disturbed than we.

They started at the tributary peal
Of instantaneous thunder, which announced,
Through the still air, the closing of the Grave,
And distant mountains echoed with a sound
Of lamentation, never heard before!"

The Pastor ceased.—My venerable Friend,
Victoriously upraised his clear bright eye;
And, when that enlogy was ended, stood
Enrapt, as if his inward sense perceived
The prolongation of some still response,
Sent by the ancient Soul of this wide land,
The Spirit of its mountains and its seas,
Its cities, temples, fields, its awful power,
Its rights and virtues—by that Deity
Descending, and supporting his pure heart
With patriotic confidence and joy.
And, at the last of those memorial words,
The pining Solitary turned aside;
Whether through manly instinct to conceal
Tender emotions spreading from the heart
To his worn cheek; or with uneasy shame
For those cold humors of habitual spleen
That, fondly seeking in dispraise of man
Solace and self-excuse, had sometimes urged
To self-abuse a not inelegant tongue.
—Right toward the sacred Edifice his steps
Had been directed; and we saw him now
Intent upon a monumental stone,
Whose uncouth form was grafted on the wall,
Or rather seemed to have grown into the side
Of the rude pile; as oft-times trunks of trees,
Where nature works in wild and craggy spots,

Are seen incorporate with the living rock—
To endure for aye. The Vicar, taking note
Of his employment, with a courteous smile
Exclaimed—

“The sagest Antiquarian’s eye
That task would foil;” then, letting fall his voice
While he advanced, thus spake: “Tradition tells
That, in Eliza’s golden days, a Knight
Came on a war-horse sumptuously attired,
And fixed his home in this sequestered vale.
’Tis left untold if here he first drew breath,
Or as a stranger reached this deep recess,
Unknowing and unknown. A pleasing thought
I sometimes entertain, that haply bound
To Scotland’s court in service of his Queen,
Or sent on mission to some northern Chief
Of England’s realm, this vale he might have seen
With transient observation; and thence caught
An image fair, which, brightening in his soul
When joy of war and pride of chivalry
Languijshed beneath accumulated years,
Had power to draw him from the world, resolved
To make that paradise his chosen home
To which his peaceful fancy oft had turned.

Vague thoughts are these; but, if belief may rest
Upon unwritten story fondly traced
From sire to son, in this obscure retreat
The Knight arrived, with spear and shield, and borne
Upon a Charger gorgeously bedecked
With broidered housings. And the lofty Steed—
His sole companion, and his faithful friend,
Whom he, in gratitude, let loose to range

In fertile pastures—was beheld with eyes
Of admiration and delightful awe,
By those untravelled Dalesmen. With less pride,
Yet free from touch of envious discontent,
They saw a mansion at his bidding rise,
Like a bright star, amid the lowly band
Of their rude homesteads. Here the Warrior dwelt;
And, in that mansion, children of his own,
Or kindred, gathered round him. As a tree
That falls and disappears, the house is gone;
And, through improvidence or want of love
For ancient worth and honorable things,
The spear and shield are vanished, which the Knight
Hung in his rustic hall. One ivied arch
Myself have seen, a gateway, last remains
Of that foundation in domestic care
Raised by his hands. And now no trace is left
Of the mild-hearted Champion, save this stone,
Faithless memorial! and his family name
Borne by yon clustering cottages, that sprang
From out the ruins of his stately lodge:
These, and the name and title at full length,—
~~Sir Alfred Kettling~~, with appropriate words
Accompanied, still extant, in a wreath
Or posy, girding round the several fronts
Of three clear-sounding and harmonious bells,
That in the steeple hang, his pious gift."

"So fails, so languishes, grows dim, and dies,"
The grey-haired Wanderer pensively exclaimed,
"All that this world is proud of. From their spheres
The stars of human glory are cast down;
Perish the roses and the flowers of kings

Princes, and Emperors, and the crowns and palms
 Of all the mighty, withered and consumed!¹²
 Nor is power given to lowliest innocence
 Long to protect her own. The man himself
 Departs ; and soon is spent the line of those
 Who, in the bodily image, in the mind,
 In heart or soul, in station or pursuit,
 Did most resemble him. Degrees and ranks,
 Fraternities and orders—heaping high
 New wealth upon the burthen of the old,
 And placing trust in privilege confirmed
 And re-confirmed—are scoffed at with a smile
 Of greedy foretaste, from the secret stand
 Of Desolation, aimed : to slow decline
 These yield, and these to sudden overthrow :
 Their virtue, service, happiness, and state
 Expire ; and nature's pleasant robe of green,
 Humanity's appointed shroud, enwraps
 Their monuments and their memory. The vast Frame
 Of social nature changes evermore
 Her organs and her members with decay
 Restless, and restless generation, powers
 And functions dying and produced at need,—
 And by this law the mighty whole subsists :
 With an ascent and progress in the main ;
 Yet, oh ! how disproportioned to the hopes
 And expectations of self-flattering minds !

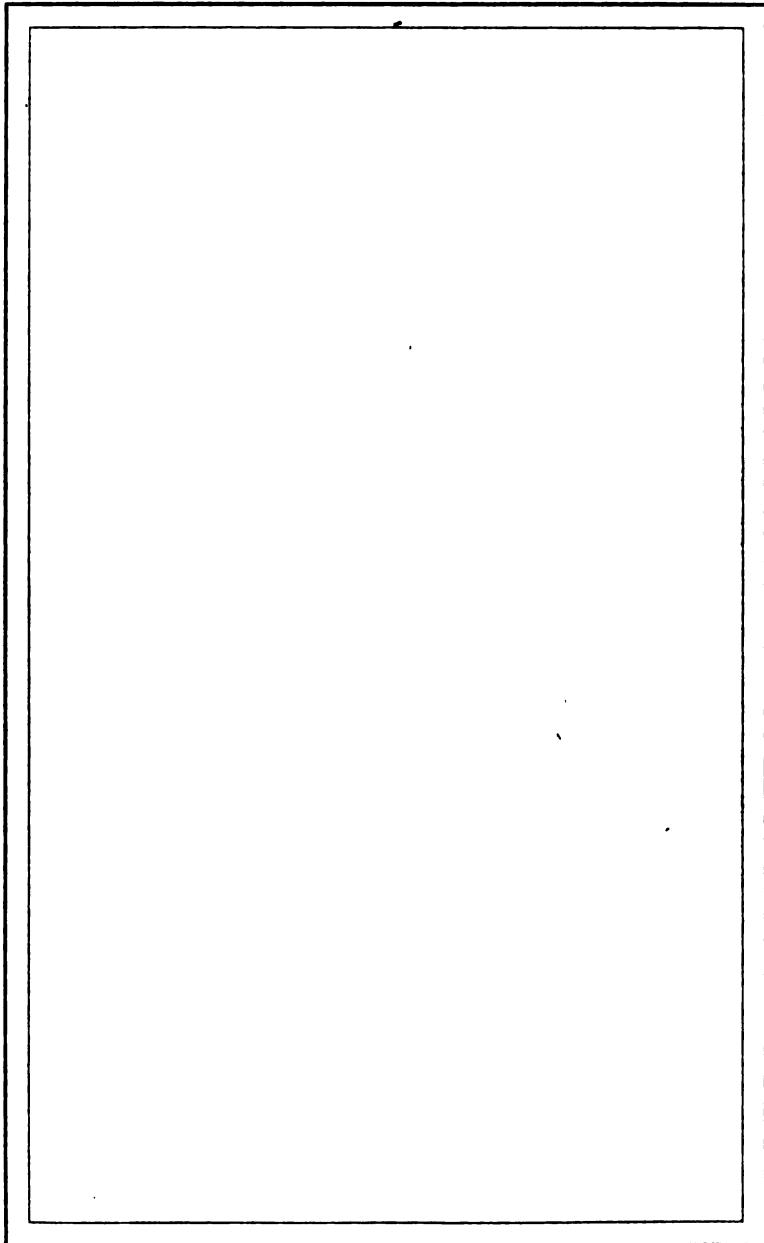
The courteous Knight, whose bones are here interred,
 Lived in an age conspicuous as our own
 For strife and ferment in the minds of men ;
 Whence alteration in the forms of things,

Various and vast. A memorable age !
Which did to him assign a pensive lot—
To linger 'mid the last of those bright clouds
That, on the steady breeze of honor, sailed
In long procession calm and beautiful.
He who had seen his own bright order fade,
And its devotion gradually decline,
(While war, relinquishing the lance and shield
Her temper changed, and bowed to other laws)
Had also witnessed, in his morn of life,
That violent commotion, which o'erthrew,
In town and city and sequestered glen,
Altar, and cross, and church of solemn roof,
And old religious house—pile after pile ;
And shook their tenants out into the fields,
Like wild beasts without home ! Their hour was
come ;
But why no softening thought of gratitude,
No just remembrance, scruple, or wise doubt ?
Benevolence is mild ; nor borrows help,
Save at worst need, from bold impetuous force
Fitliest allied to anger and revenge.
But Human-kind rejoices in the might
Of mutability ; and airy hopes,
Dancing around her, hinder and disturb
Those meditations of the soul that feed
The retrospective virtues. Festive songs
Break from the maddened nations at the sight
Of sudden overthrow ; and cold neglect
Is the sure consequence of slow decay.

Even," said the Wanderer, "as that courteous
Knight,

Bound by his vow to labor for redress
Of all who suffer wrong, and to enact
By sword and lance the law of gentleness,
(If I may venture of myself to speak,
Trusting that not incongruously I blend
Low things with lofty) I too shall be doomed
To outlive the kindly use and fair esteem
Of the poor calling which my youth embraced
With no unworthy prospect. But enough;
—Thoughts crowd upon me—and 't were seemlier
now

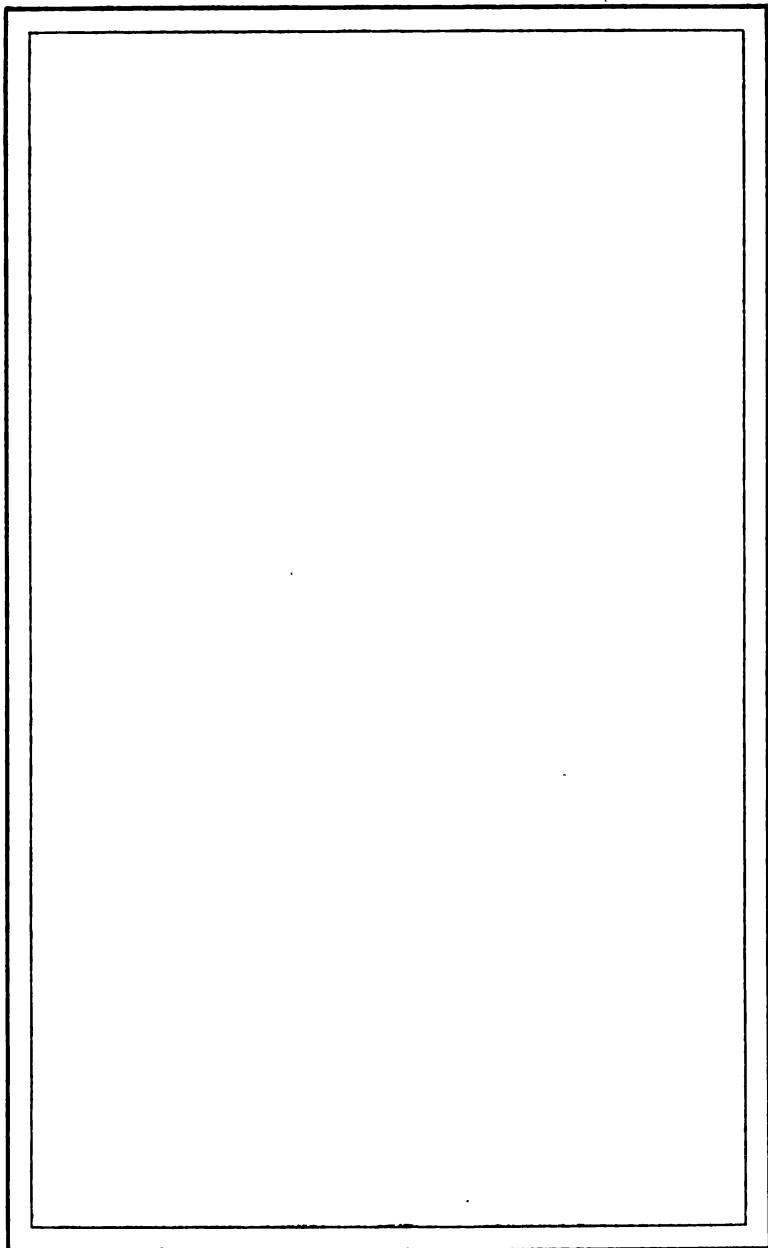
To stop, and yield our gracious Teacher thanks
For the pathetic records which his voice
Hath here delivered; words of heartfelt truth,
Tending to patience when affliction strikes;
To hope and love; to confident repose
In God; and reverence for the dust of Man."



THE EXCURSION.

BOOK EIGHTH.

THE PARSONAGE.



THE PARSONAGE.

ARGUMENT.

Pastor's apology and apprehensions that he might have detained his Auditors too long,—the Pastor's invitation to his house.—Solitary disinclined to comply—rallies the Wanderer—and playfully draws a comparison between his itinerant profession and that of the Knight-errant—which leads to Wanderer's giving an account of changes in the Country from the manufacturing spirit.—Favorable effects.—The other side of the picture, and chiefly as it has affected the humbler classes.—Wanderer asserts the hollowness of all national grandeur if unsupported by moral worth.—Physical science unable to support itself.—Lamentations over an excess of manufacturing industry among the humbler Classes of Society.—Picture of a Child employed in a Cotton-mill.—Ignorance and degradation of Children among the agricultural Population reviewed.—Conversation broken off by a renewed Invitation from the Pastor.—Path leading to his House.—Its appearance described.—His Daughter.—His Wife.—His Son (a Boy) enters with his Companion.—Their happy appearance.—The Wanderer how affected by the sight of them.

THE pensive Sceptic of the lonely vale
To those acknowledgments subscribed his own,
With a sedate compliance, which the Priest
Failed not to notice, only pleased, said :—
“ If ye, by whom invited I began
These narratives of calm and humble life,
Be satisfied, 'tis well,—the end is gained ;
And, in return for sympathy bestowed
And patient listening, thanks accept from me.
—Life, death, eternity ! momentous themes

Are they—and might demand a seraph's tongue,
Were they not equal to their own support ;
And therefore no incompetence of mine
Could do them wrong. The universal forms
Of human nature, in a spot like this,
Present themselves at once to all men's view :
Ye wished for act and circumstance, that make
The individual known and understood ;
And such as my best judgment could select
From what the place afforded, have been given ;
Though apprehensions crossed me that my zeal
To his might well be likened, who unlocks
A cabinet stored with gems and pictures—draws
His treasures forth, soliciting regard
To this, and this, as worthier than the last,
Till the spectator, who awhile was pleased
More than the exhibitor himself, becomes
Weary and faint, and longs to be released.
—But let us hence ! my dwelling is in sight,
And there—”

At this the Solitary shrunk
With backward will ; but, wanting not address
That inward motion to disguise, he said
To his Compatriot, smiling as he spake ;
—“ The peaceable remains of this good Knight
Would be disturbed, I fear, with wrathful scorn,
If consciousness could reach him where he lies
That one, albeit of these degenerate times,
Deploring changes past, or dreading change
Foreseen, had dared to couple, even in thought,
The fine vocation of the sword and lance
With t'le gross aims and body-bending toil

Of a poor brotherhood who walk the earth
Pitied, and, where they are not known, despised.

Yet, by the good Knight's leave, the two estates
Are graced with some resemblance. Errant those,
Exiles and wanderers—and the like are these ;
Who, with their burthen, traverse hill and dale,
Carrying relief for nature's simple wants.
—What though no higher recompense be sought
Than honest maintenance, by irksome toil
Full oft procured, yet may they claim respect,
Among the intelligent, for what this course
Enables them to be and to perform.
Their tardy steps give leisure to observe,
While solitude permits the mind to feel ;
Instructs, and prompts her to supply defects
By the division of her inward self
For grateful converse : and to these poor men
Nature (I but repeat your favorite boast)
Is bountiful—go wheresoe'er they may ;
Kind Nature's various wealth is all their own.
Versed in the characters of men ; and bound,
By ties of daily interest, to maintain
Conciliatory manners and smooth speech ;
Such have been, and still are in their degree,
Examples efficacious to refine
Rude intercourse ; apt agents to expel,
By importation of unlooked-for arts,
Barbarian torpor, and blind prejudice ;
Raising, through just gradation, savage life
To rustic, and the rustic to urbane.
—Within their moving magazines is lodged
Power that comes forth to quicken and exalt

Affections seated in the mother's breast,
And in the lover's fancy ; and to feed
The sober sympathies of long-tried friends.
—By these Itinerants, as experienced men,
Counsel is given ; contention they appease
With gentle language ; in remotest wilds,
Tears wipe away, and pleasant tidings bring ;
Could the proud quest of chivalry do more ?”

“ Happy,” rejoined the Wanderer, “ they who gain
A panegyric from your generous tongue !
But, if to these Wayfarers once pertained
Aught of romantic interest, it is gone.
Their purer service, in this realm at least,
Is past for ever.—An inventive Age
Has wrought, if not with speed of magic, yet
To most strange issues. I have lived to mark
A new and unforeseen creation rise
From out the labors of a peaceful Land
Wielding her potent enginery to frame
And to produce, with appetite as keen
As that of war, which rests not night or day,
Industrious to destroy ! With fruitless pains
Might one like me *now* visit many a tract
Which, in his youth, he trod, and trod again,
A lone pedestrian with a scanty freight,
Wished-for, or welcome, wheresoe'er he came—
Among the tenantry of thorpe and vill ;
Or straggling burgh, of ancient charter proud,
And dignified by battlements and towers
Of some stern castle, mouldering on the brow
Of a green hill or bank of rugged stream.
The footh-path faintly marked, the horse-track wild,

And formidable length of plashy lane,
(Prized avenues ere others had been shaped
Or easier links connecting place with place)
Have vanished—swallowed up by stately roads
Easy and bold, that penetrate the gloom
Of Britain's farthest glens. The Earth has lent
Her waters, Air her breezes ; and the sail
Of traffic glides with ceaseless intercourse,
Glistening along the low and woody dale ;
Or, in its progress, on the lofty side,
Of some bare hill, with wonder kenned from far.¹⁴

Meanwhile, at social Industry's command
How quick, how vast an increase ! From the germ
Of some poor hamlet, rapidly produced
Here a huge town, continuous and compact,
Hiding the face of earth for leagues—and there,
Where not a habitation stood before,
Abodes of men irregularly massed
Like trees in forests,—spread through spacious tracts,
O'er which the smoke of unremitting fires
Hangs permanent, and plentiful as wreaths
Of vapor glittering in the morning sun.
And, wheresoe'er the traveller turns his steps,
He sees the barren wilderness erased,
Or disappearing ; triumph that proclaims
How much the mild Directress of the plough
Owes to alliance with these new-born arts !
—Hence is the wide sea peopled,—hence the shores
Of Britain are resorted to by ships
Freighted from every climate of the world
With the world's choicest produce. Hence that sum
Of keels that rest within her crowded ports,

Or ride at anchor in her sounds and bays ;
That animating spectacle of sails
That, through her inland regions, to and fro
Pass with the respirations of the tide,
Perpetual, multitudinous ! Finally,
Hence a dread arm of floating power, a voice
Of thunder, daunting those who would approach
With hostile purposes the blessed Isle,
Truth's consecrated residence, the seat
Impregnable of Liberty and Peace.

And yet, O happy Pastor of a flock
Faithfully watched, and, by that loving care
And Heaven's good providence, preserved from
taint !
With you I grieve, when on the darker side
Of this great change I look ; and there behold
Such outrage done to nature as compels
The indignant power to justify herself ;
Yea, to avenge her violated rights,
For England's bane. — When soothing darkness
spreads
O'er hill and vale," the Wanderer thus expressed
His recollections, " and the punctual stars,
While all things else are gathering to their homes,
Advance, and in the firmament of heaven
Glitter—but undisturbing, undisturbed ;
As if their silent company were charged
With peaceful admonitions for the heart
Of all-beholding Man, earth's thoughtful lord ;
Then, in full many a region, once like this
The assured domain of calm simplicity
And pensive quiet, an unnatural light

Prepared for never-resting Labor's eyes
Breaks from a many-windowed fabric huge ;
And at the appointed hour a bell is heard,
Of harsher import than the curfew-knoll
That spake the Norman Conqueror's stern behest—
A local summons to unceasing toil !
Disgorged are now the ministers of day ;
And, as they issue from the illumined pile,
A fresh band meets them, at the crowded door—
And in the courts—and where the rumbling stream,
That turns the multitude of dizzy wheels,
Glares, like a troubled spirit, in its bed
Among the rocks below. Men, maidens, youths,
Mother and little children, boys and girls,
Enter, and each the wonted task resumes
Within this temple, where is offered up
To Gain, the master idol of the realm,
Perpetual sacrifice. Even thus of old
Our ancestors, within the still domain
Of vast cathedral or conventional church,
Their vigils kept ; where tapers day and night
On the dim altar burned continually,
In token that the House was evermore
Watching to God. Religious men were they ;
Nor would their reasons, tutored to aspire
Above this transitory world, allow
That there should pass a moment of the year,
When in their land the Almighty's service ceased.

Triumph who will in these profaner rites
Which we, a generation self-extolled,
As zealously perform ! I cannot share
His proud complacency :—yet do I exult,

Casting reserve away, exult to see
An intellectual mastery exercised
O'er the blind elements ; a purpose given,
A perseverance fed ; almost a soul
Imparted—to brute matter. I rejoice,
Measuring the force of those gigantic powers
That, by the thinking mind, have been compelled
To serve the will of feeble-bodied Man.
For with the sense of admiration blends
The animating hope that time may come
When, strengthened, yet not dazzled, by the might
Of this dominion over nature gained,
Men of all lands shall exercise the same
In due proportion to their country's need ;
Learning, though late, that all true glory rests,
All praise, all safety, and all happiness,
Upon the moral law. Egyptian Thebes,
Tyre, by the margin of the sounding waves,
Palmyra, central in the desert, fell ;
And the Arts died by which they had been raised.
—Call Archimedes from his buried tomb
Upon the grave of vanished Syracuse,
And feeling the Sage shall make report
How insecure, how baseless in itself,
Is the Philosophy whose sway depends
On mere material instruments ;—how weak
Those arts, and high inventions, if unpropped
By virtue.—He, sighing with pensive grief,
Amid his calm abstractions, would admit
That not the slender privilege is theirs
To save themselves from blank forgetfulness !"

X

When from the Wanderer's lips these words had fallen,
I said, " And, did in truth those vaunted Arts
Possess such privilege, how could we escape
Sadness and keen regret, we who revere,
And would preserve as things above all price,
The old domestic morals of the land,
Her simple manners, and the stable worth
That dignified and cheered a low estate ?
Oh ! where is now the character of peace,
Sobriety, and order, and chaste love,
And honest dealing, and untainted speech,
And pure good-will, and hospitable cheer ;
That made the very thought of country-life
A thought of refuge, for a mind detained
Reluctantly amid the bustling crowd ?
Where now the beauty of the Sabbath kept
With conscientious reverence, as a day
By the almighty Lawgiver pronounced
Holy and blest ? and where the winning grace
Of all the lighter ornaments attached
To time and season, as the year rolled round ?"

" Fled !" was the Wanderer's passionate response,
" Fled utterly ! or only to be traced
In a few fortunate retreats like this ;
Which I behold with trembling, when I think
What lamentable change, a year—a month—
May bring ; that brook converting as it runs
Into an instrument of deadly bane
For those, who, yet untempted to forsake
The simple occupations of their sires,
Drink the pure water of its innocent stream

With lip almost as pure.—Domestic bliss
(Or call it comfort, by a humbler name,)
How art thou blighted for the poor Man's heart !
Lo ! in such neighborhood, from morn to eve,
The habitations empty ! or perchance
The Mother left alone,—no helping hand
To rock the cradle of her peevish babe ;
No daughters round her, busy at the wheel,
Or in despatch of each day's little growth
Of household occupation ; no nice arts
Of needle-work ; no bustle at the fire,
Where once the dinner was prepared with pride ;
Nothing to speed the day, or cheer the mind ;
Nothing to praise, to teach or to command !

The Father, if perchance he still retain
His old employments, goes to field or wood,
No longer led or followed by the Sons ;
Idlers perchance they were,—but in *his* sight ;
Breathing fresh air, and treading the green earth ;
'Till their short holiday of childhood ceased,
Ne'er to return ! That birthright now is lost
Economists will tell you that the State
Thrives by the forfeiture—unfeeling thought,
And false as monstrous ! Can the mother thrive
By the destruction of her innocent sons
In whom a premature necessity
Blocks out the forms of nature, preconsumes
The reason, famishes the heart, shuts up
The infant Being in itself, and makes
Its very spring a season of decay !
The lot is wretched, the condition sad,
Whether a pining discontent survive,

And thirst for change; or habit hath subdued
The soul deprest, dejected—even to love
Of her close tasks, and long captivity.

Oh, banish far such wisdom as condemns
A native Briton to these inward chains,
Fixed in his soul, so early and so deep;
Without his own consent, or knowledge, fixed!
He is a slave to whom release comes not,
And cannot come. The boy, where'er he turns,
Is still a prisoner; when the wind is up
Among the clouds, and roars through the ancient
woods;
Or when the sun is shining in the east,
Quiet and calm. Behold him—in the school
Of his attainments? no; but with the air
Fanning his temples under heaven's blue arch.
His raiment, whitened o'er with cotton-flakes
Or locks of wool, announces whence he comes.
Creeping his gait and cowering, his lip pale,
His respiration quick and audible;
And scarcely could you fancy that a gleam
Could break from out those languid eyes, or a blush
Mantle upon his cheek. Is this the form,
Is that the countenance, and such the port,
Of no mean Being? One who should be clothed
With dignity befitting his proud hope;
Who, in his very childhood, should appear
Sublime from present purity and joy!
The limbs increase; but liberty of mind
Is gone for ever; and this organic frame,
So joyful in its motions, is become
Dull, to the joy of her own motions dead;

And even the touch, so exquisitely pour'd
Through the whole body, with a languid will
Performs its functions ; rarely competent
To impress a vivid feeling on the mind
Of what there is delightful in the breeze,
The gentle visitations of the sun,
Or lapse of liquid element—by hand,
Or foot, or lip, in summer's warmth—perceived.
—Can hope look forward to a manhood raised
On such foundations ?"

"Hope is none for him!"

The pale Recluse indignantly exclaimed,
"And tens of thousands suffer wrong as deep.
Yet be it asked, in justice to our age,
If there were not, before those arts appeared,
These structures rose, commingling old and young,
And unripe sex with sex, for mutual taint;
If there were not, *then*, in our far-famed Isle,
Multitudes, who from infancy had breathed
Air unimprisoned, and had lived at large;
Yet walked beneath the sun, in human shape,
As abject, as degraded ? At this day,
Who shall enumerate the crazy huts
And tottering hovels, whence do issue forth
A ragged Offspring, with their upright hair
Crowned like the image of fantastic Fear ;
Or wearing, (shall we say ?) in that white growth
An ill-adjusted turban, for defence
Or fierceness, wreathed around their sunburnt brows,
By savage Nature ? Shrivelled are their lips ;
Naked, and colored like the soil, the feet
On which they stand ; as if thereby they drew
Some nourishment, as trees do by their roots,

From earth, the common mother of us all.
Figure and mien, complexion and attire,
Are leagued to strike dismay ; but outstretched hand
And whining voice, denote them supplicants
For the least boon that pity can bestow.
Such on the breast of darksome heaths are found ;
And with their parents occupy the skirts,
Of furze-clad commons ; such are born and reared
At the mine's mouth, under impending rocks ;
Or dwell in chambers of some natural cave ;
Or where their ancestors erected huts,
For the convenience of unlawful gain,
In forest purlieus ; and the like are bred,
All England through, with nooks and slips of ground .
Purloined, in times less jealous than our own,
From the green margin of the public way,
A residence afford them, mid the bloom
And gaiety of cultivated fields.
Such (we will hope the lowest in the scale)
Do I remember oft-times to have seen
'Mid Buxton's dreary heights. In earnest watch,
Till the swift vehicle approach, they stand ;
Then, followed closely with the cloud of dust,
An uncouthfeat exhibit, and are gone
Heels over head, like tumblers on a stage.
—Up from the ground they snatch the copper coin,
And, on the freight of merry passengers
Fixing a steady eye, maintain their speed ;
And spin—and pant—and overhead again,
Wild pursuivants ! until their breath is lost,
Or bounty tires—and every face, that smiled
Encouragement, hath ceased to look that way.
—But, like the vagrants of the gipsy tribe,

These, bred to little pleasure in themselves,
Are profitless to others.

Turn we then
To Britons born and bred within the pale
Of civil polity, and early trained
To earn, by wholesome labor in the field,
The bread they eat. A sample should I give
Of what this stock hath long produced to enrich
The tender age of life, ye would exclaim,
'Is this the whistling plough-boy whose shrill notes
Imparts new gladness to the morning air ?'
Forgive me if I venture to suspect
That many, sweet to hear of in soft verse,
Are of no finer frame. Stiff are his joints ;
Beneath a cumbrous frock, that to the knees
Invests the thriving churl, his legs appear,
Fellows to those that lustily upheld
The wooden stools for everlasting use,
Whereon our fathers sate. And mark his brow !
Under whose shaggy canopy are set
Two eyes—not dim, but of a healthy stare—
Wide, sluggish, blank, and ignorant, and strange—
Proclaiming boldly that they never drew
A look or motion of intelligence
From infant-conning of the Christ-cross-row,
Or puzzling through a primer, line by line,
Till perfect mastery crown the pains at last.
—What kindly warmth from touch of fostering hand
What penetrating power of sun or breeze,
Shall e'er dissolve the crust wherein his soul
Sleeps, like a caterpillar sheathed in ice ?
This torpor is no pitiable work
Of modern ingenuity ; no town

Nor crowded city can be taxed with aught
Of sottish vice or desperate breach of law,
To which (and who can tell where or how soon?)
He may be roused. This Boy the fields produce:
His spade and hoe, mattock and glittering scythe,
The carter's whip that on his shoulder rests
In air high-towering with a boorish pomp,
The sceptre of his sway; his country's name,
Her equal rights, her churches and her schools—
What have they done for him? And, let me ask,
For tens of thousands uninformed as he?
In brief, what liberty of *mind* is here?"

This ardent sally pleased the mild good Man,
To whom the appeal couched in its closing words
Was pointedly addressed; and to the thoughts
That in ascent or opposition rose
Within his mind, he seemed prepared to give
Prompt utterance; but the Vicar interposed
With invitation urgently renewed.
—We followed, taking as he led, a path
Along a hedge of hollies dark and tall,
Whose flexible boughs low bending with a weight
Of leafy spray, concealed the stems and roots
That gave them nourishment. When frosty winds
Howl from the north, what kindly warmth, methought,
Is here—how grateful this impervious screen!
—Not shaped by simple wearing of the foot
On rural business passing to and fro
Was the commodious walk: a careful hand
Had marked the line, and strown its surface o'er
With pure cerulean gravel, from the heights
Fetched by a neighboring brook.—Across the vale

The stately fence accompanied our steps;
And thus the pathway, by perennial green
Guarded and graced, seemed fashioned to unite,
As by a beautiful yet solemn chain,
The Pastor's mansion with the house of prayer.

Like image of solemnity, conjoined
With feminine allurement soft and fair,
The mansion's self displayed ;—a reverend pile
With bold projections and recesses deep ;
Shadowy, yet gay and lightsome as it stood
Fronting the noon tide sun. We paused to admire
The pillared porch, elaborately embossed ;
The low wide windows with their mullions old ;
The cornice, richly fretted, of grey stone ;
And that smooth slope from which the dwelling rose
By beds and banks Arcadian of gay flowers
And flowering shrubs, protected and adorned :
Profusion bright ! and every flower assuming
A more than natural vividness of hue,
From unaffected contrast with the gloom
Of sober cypress, and the darker foil
Of yew, in which survive some traces, here
Not unbecoming, of grotesque device
And uncouth fancy. From behind the roof
Rose the slim ash and massy sycamore,
Blending their diverse foliage with the green
Of ivy, flourishing and thick, that clasped
The huge round chimneys, harbor of delight
For wren and redbreast,—where they sit and sing
Their slender ditties when the trees are bare.
Nor must I leave untouched (the picture else
Were incomplete) a relique of old times

Happily spared, a little Gothic niche
Of nicest workmanship ; that once had held
The sculptured image of some patron-saint,
Or of the blessed Virgin, looking down
On all who entered those religious doors.

But lo ! where from the Rocky garden-mount
Crowned by its antique summer-house—descends,
Light as the silver fawn, a radiant Girl ;
For she hath recognized her honored friend,
The Wanderer ever welcome ! A prompt kiss
The gladsome Child bestows at his request ;
And, up the flowery lawn as we advance,
Hangs on the old Man with a happy look,
And with a pretty restless hand of love.
—We enter—by the Lady of the place
Cordially greeted. Graceful was her port :
A lofty stature, undepressed by time,
Whose visitation had not wholly spared
The finer lineaments of form and face ;
To that complexion brought which prudence trusts in
And wisdom loves.—But when a stately ship
Sails in smooth weather by the placid coast
On homeward voyage, what—if wind and wave,
And hardship undergone in various climes,
Have caused her to abate the virgin pride,
And that full trim of inexperienced hope
With which she left her haven—not for this,
Should the sun strike her, and the impartial breeze
Play on her streamers, fails she to assume
Brightness and touching beauty of her own,
That charm all eyes. So bright, so fair, appeared
This goodly Matron, shining in the beams

Of unexpected pleasure.—Soon the board
Was spread, and we partook a plain repast.

Here, resting in cool shelter, we beguiled
The mid-day hours with desultory talk ;
From trivial themes to general argument
Passing, as accident or fancy led,
Or courtesy prescribed. While question rose
And answer flowed, the fetters of reserve
Dropping from every mind, the Solitary
Resumed the manners of his happier days ;
And in the various conversation bore
A willing, nay, at times, a forward part ;
Yet with the grace of one who in the world
Had learned the art of pleasing, and had now
Occasion given him to display his skill,
Upon the steadfast 'vantage-ground of truth.
He gazed with admiration unsuppressed,
Upon the landscape of the sun-bright vale,
Seen, from the shady room in which we sate,
In softened perspective ; and more than once
Praised the consummate harmony serene
Of gravity and elegance, diffused
Around the mansion and its whole domain ;
Not, doubtless, without help of female taste
And female care.—“ A blessed lot is yours ! ”
The words escaped his lip, with a tender sigh
Breathed over them ; but suddenly the door
Flew open, and a pair of lusty Boys
Appeared, confusion checking their delight.
—Not brothers they in feature or attire,
But fond companions, so I guessed, in field,
And by the river's margin—whence they come,

Keen anglers with unusual spoil elated.
One bears a willow-pannier on his back,
The boy of plainer garb, whose blush survives
More deeply tinged. Twin might the other be
To that fair girl who from the garden-mount
Bounded :—triumphant entry this for him !
Between his hands he holds a smooth blue stone,
On whose capacious surface see outspread
Large store of gleaming crimson-spotted trout ;
Ranged side by side, and lessening by degrees
Up to the dwarf that tops the pinnacle.
Upon the board he lays the sky-blue stone
With its rich freight ; their number he proclaims ;
Tells from what pool the noblest had been dragged ;
And where the very monarch of the brook,
After long struggle, had escaped at last—
Stealing alternately at them and us
(As doth his comrade too) a look of pride ;
And, verily, the silent creatures made
A splendid sight, together thus exposed ;
Dead—but not sullied or deformed by Death,
That seemed to pity what he could not spare.

But O, the animation in the mien
Of those two boys ! yea in the very words
With which the young narrator was inspired,
When, as our questions led, he told at large
Of that day's prowess ! Him might I compare,
His looks, tones, gestures, eager eloquence,
To a bold brook that splits for better speed,
And at the self-same moment, works its way
Through many channels, ever and anon
Parted and re-united : his compeer

To the still lake, whose stillness is to sight
As beautiful—as grateful to the mind.
—But to what object shall the lovely Girl
Be likened ? She whose countenance and air
Unite the graceful qualities of both,
Even as she shares the pride and joy of both.

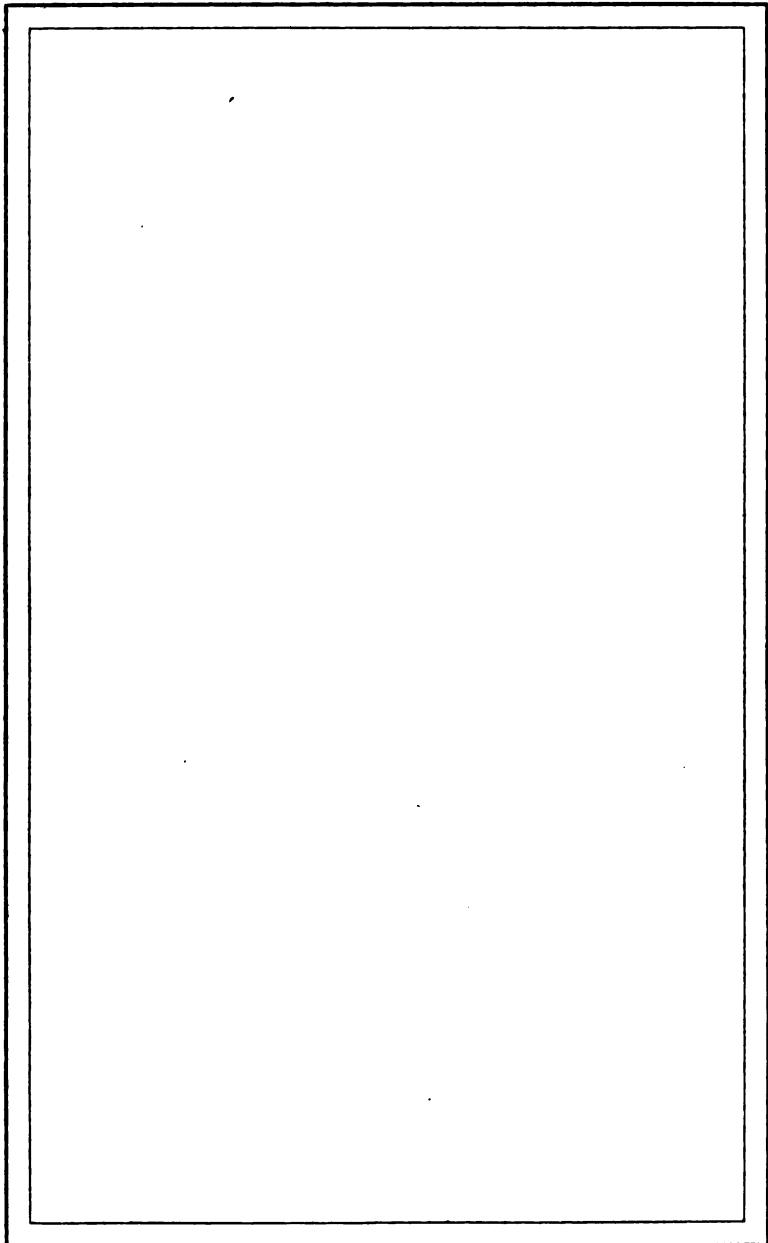
My grey-haired Friend was moved ; his vivid eye
Glistened with tenderness ; his mind, I knew,
Was full : and had, I doubted not, returned,
Upon this impulse, to the theme—erewhile
Abruptly broken off. The ruddy boys
Withdrew, on summons to their well-earned meal ;
And He—to whom all tongues resigned their rights
With willingness, to whom the general ear
Listened with readier patience than to strain
Of music, lute or harp, a long delight
That ceased not when his voice had ceased—as One
Who from truth's central point serenely views
The compass of his argument—began
Mildly, and with a clear and steady tone. .

T H E E X C U R S I O N .

**—
B O O K N I N T H .
—**

DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER.

**AND AN
EVENING VISIT TO THE LAKE.**



DISCOURSE OF THE WANDERER, AND AN EVENING VISIT TO THE LAKE.

ARGUMENT.

Wanderer asserts that an active principle pervades the Universe, its noblest seat the human soul.—How lively this principle is in Childhood.—Hence the delight in old Age of looking back upon Childhood.—The dignity, powers, and privileges of Age asserted.—These not to be looked for generally but under a just government.—Right of a human Creature to be exempt from being considered as a mere Instrument.—The condition of multitudes deplored.—Former conversation recurred to, and the Wanderer's opinions set in a clearer light.—Truth placed within reach of the humblest.—Equality.—Happy state of the two boys again adverted to.—Earnest wish expressed for a System of National Education established universally by Government.—Glorious effects of this foretold.—Walk to the Lake.—Grand spectacle from the side of a hill.—Address of the Friar to the Supreme Being—in the course of which he contrasts with ancient Barbarism the present appearance of the scene before him.—The change ascribed to Christianity.—Apostrophe to his flock, living and dead.—Gratitude to the Almighty.—Return over the Lake.—Parting with the Solitary.—Under what circumstances.

“ **T**O every Form of being is assigned,”
Thus calmly spake the venerable Sage,
“ An *active* Principle :—howe'er removed
From sense and observation, it subsists
In all things, in all natures ; in the stars
Of azure heaven, the unenduring clouds,
In flower and tree, in every pebbly stone
That paves the brooks, the stationary rocks,
The moving waters, and the invisible air.

Whate'er exists hath properties that spread
Beyond itself, communicating good,
A simple blessing, or with evil mixed ;
Spirit that knows no insulated spot,
No chasm, no solitude ; from link to link
It circulates, the Soul of all the worlds.
This is the freedom of the universe ;
Unfolded still the more, more visible,
The more we know ; and yet is reverenced least,
And least respected in the human Mind,
Its most apparent home. / The food of hope
Is meditated action ; robbed of this,
Her sole support, she languishes and dies.
We perish also ; for we live by hope
And by desire ; we see by the glad light
And breathe the sweet air of futurity ;
And so we live, or else we have no life.
To-morrow—nay perchance this very hour
(For every moment hath its own to-morrow !)
Those blooming Boys, whose hearts are almost sick
With present triumph, will be sure to find
A field before them freshened with the dew
Of other expectations ;—in which course
Their happy year spins round. The youth obeys
A glad impulse ; and so moves the man
'Mid all his apprehensions, cares, and fears,—
Or so he ought to move. Ah ! why in age
Do we revert so fondly to the walks
Of childhood—but that there the Soul discerns
The dear memorial footsteps unimpaired
Of her own native vigor ; thence can hear
Reverberations ; and a choral song,
Commingling with the incense that ascends,

Undaunted, towards the imperishable heavens,
From her own lonely altar?

Do not think

That good and wise ever will be allowed,
Though strength decay, to breathe in such estate
As shall divide them wholly from the stir
Of hopeful nature. Rightly is it said
That Man descends into the VALE of years;
Yet have I thought that we might also speak,
And not presumptuously, I trust, of Age,
As of a final EMINENCE; though bare
In aspect and forbidding, yet a point
On which 't is not impossible to sit
In awful sovereignty; a place of power,
A throne that may be likened unto his,
Who, in some placid day of summer, looks
Down from a mountain-top,—say one of those.
High peaks that bound the vale where now we are.
Faint, and diminished to the gazing eye,
Forest and field, and hill and dale appear,
With all the shapes over their surface spread:
But, while the gross and visible frame of things
Relinquishes its hold upon the sense,
Yea almost on the Mind herself, and seems
All unsubstantialized,—how loud the voice
Of waters, with invigorated peal
From the full river in the vale below,
Ascending! For on that superior height
Who sits, is disincumbered from the press
Of near obstructions, and is privileged
To breathe in solitude, above the host
Of ever-humming insects, 'mid thin air.
That suits not them. The murmur of the leaves,

Many and idle, visits not his ear :
This he is freed from, and from thousand notes
(Not less unceasing, not less vain than these,)
By which the finer passages of sense
Are occupied ; and the Soul that would incline
To listen, is prevented or deterred.

And may it not be hoped, that, placed by age
In like removal, tranquil though severe,
We are not so removed for utter loss ;
But for some favor, suited to our need ?
What more than that the severing should confer
Fresh power to commune with the invisible world,
And hear the mighty stream of tendency
Uttering, for elevation of our thought,
A clear sonorous voice, inaudible
To the vast multitude ; whose doom it is
To run the giddy round of vain delight,
Or fret and labor on the Plain below.

But, if to such sublime ascent the hopes
Of Man may rise, as to a welcome close
And termination of his mortal course ;
Them only can such hope inspire whose minds
Have not been starved by absolute neglect ;
Nor bodies crushed by unremitting toil ;
To whom kind Nature, therefore, may afford
Proof of the sacred love she bears for all ;
Whose birthright Reason, therefore, may ensure.
For me, consulting what I feel within
In times when most existence with herself
Is satisfied, I cannot but believe,
That, far as kindly Nature hath free scope

And Reason's sway predominates ; even so far,
Country, society, and time itself,
That saps the individual's bodily frame,
And lays the generations low in dust,
Do, by the almighty Ruler's grace, partake
Of one maternal spirit, bringing forth
And cherishing with ever-constant love,
That tires not, nor betrays. Our life is turned
Out of her course, wherever man is made
An offering, or a sacrifice, a tool
Or implement, a passive thing employed
As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
Of common right or interest in the end ;
Used or abused, as selfishness may prompt.
Say, what can follow for a rational soul
Perverted thus, but weakness in all good,
And strength in evil ? Hence an after-call
For chastisement, and custody, and bonds,
And oft-times Death, avenger of the past,
And the sole guardian in whose hands we dare
Entrust the future.—Not for these sad issues
Was Man created ; but to obey the law
Of life, and hope, and action. And 't is known
That when we stand upon our native soil,
Unelbowed by such objects as oppress
Our active powers, those powers themselves become
Strong to subvert our noxious qualities :
They sweep distemper from the busy day,
And make the chalice of the big round year
Run o'er with gladness ; whence the Being moves
In beauty through the world ; and all who see
Bless him, rejoicing in his neighborhood."

"Then," said the Solitary, "by what force

Of language shall a feeling heart express
Her sorrow for that multitude in whom
We look for health from seeds that have been sown
In sickness, and for increase in a power
That works but by extinction ? On themselves
They cannot lean, nor turn to their own hearts
To know what they must do ; their wisdom is
To look into the eyes of others, thence
To be instructed what they must avoid :
Or rather, let us say, how least observed,
How with most quiet and most silent death,
With the least taint and injury to the air
The oppressor breathes, their human form divine,
And their immortal soul, may waste away."

The Sage rejoined, " I thank you—you have spared
My voice the utterance of a keen regret,
A wide compassion which with you I share.
When, heretofore, I placed before your sight
A Little-one, subjected to the arts
Of modern ingenuity, and made
The senseless member of a vast machine,
Serving as doth a spindle or a wheel ;
Think not, that, pitying him, I could forget
The rustic Boy, who walks the fields, untaught ;
The slave of ignorance, and oft of want,
And miserable hunger. Much, too much,
Of this unhappy lot, in early youth
We both have witnessed, lot which I myself
Shared, though in mild and merciful degree :
Yet was the mind to hindrances exposed,
Through which I struggled, not without distress
And sometimes injury, like a lamb enthralled

'Mid thorns and brambles; or a bird that breaks
Through a strong net, and mounts upon the wind,
Though with her plumes impaired. If they whose
-souls

Should open while they range the richer fields
Of merry England, are obstructed less
By indigence, their ignorance is not less,
Nor less to be deplored. For who can doubt
That tens of thousands at this day exist
Such as the boy you painted, lineal heirs
Of those who once were vassals of her soil,
Following its fortunes like the beasts or trees
Which it sustained? But no one takes delight
In this oppression; none are proud of it;
It bears no sounding name, nor ever bore;
A standing grievance, an indigenous vice
Of every country under heaven. My thoughts
Were turned to evils that are new and chosen,
A bondage lurking under shape of good,—
Arts, in themselves beneficent and kind,
But all too fondly followed and too far;—
To victims, which the merciful can see
Nor think that they are victims—turned to wrongs,
By women, who have children of their own,
Beheld without compassion, yea with praise!
I speak of mischief by the wise diffused
With gladness, thinking that the more it spreads
The healthier, the securer, we become;
Delusion which a moment may destroy!
Lastly, I mourned for those whom I had seen
Corrupted and cast down, on favored ground,
Where circumstance and nature had combined
To shelter innocence, and cherish love;

Who, but for this intrusion, would have lived,
Possessed of health, and strength, and peace of mind ;
Thus would have lived, or never have been born.

Alas ! what differs more than man from man !
And whence that difference ? whence but from himself ?
For see the universal Race endowed
With the same upright form !—The sun is fixed,
And the infinite magnificence of heaven
Fixed, within reach of every human eye ;
The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears ;
The vernal field infuses fresh delight
Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense.
Even as an object is sublime or fair,
That object is laid open to the view
Without reserve or veil ; and as a power
Is salutary, or an influence sweet,
Are each and all enabled to perceive
That power, that influence, by impartial law.
Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all ;
Reason, and, with that reason, smiles and tears ;
Imagination, freedom in the will ;
Conscience to guide and check ; and death to be
Foretasted, immortality conceived
By all,—a blissful immortality,
To them whose holiness on earth shall make
The Spirit capable of heaven, assured.
Strange, then, nor less than monstrous, might be
deemed
The failure, if the Almighty, to this point
Liberal and undistinguishing, should hide
The excellence of moral qualities

From common understanding ; leaving truth
And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark ;
Hard to be won, and only by a few ;
Strange, should He deal herein with nice respects,
And frustrate all the rest ! Believe it not ;
The primal duties shine aloft—like stars ;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers.
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts—
No mystery is here ! Here is no boon
For high—yet not for low ; for proudly graced—
Yet not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
To heaven as lightly from the cottage-hearth
As from the haughtiest palace. He, whose soul
Ponders this true equality, may walk
The fields of earth with gratitude and hope ;
Yet, in that meditation, will he find
Motive to sadder grief, as we have found ;
Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown,
And for the injustice grieving, that hath made
So wide a difference between man and man.

Then let us rather fix our gladdened thoughts
Upon the brighter scene. How blest that pair
Of blooming Boys (which we beheld even now)
Blest in their several and their common lot !
A few short hours of each returning day
The thriving prisoners of their village-school :
And thence let loose, to seek their pleasant homes
Or range the grassy lawn in vacancy ;
To breathe and to be happy, run and shout
Idle,—but no delay, no harm, no loss ;

For every genial power of heaven and earth,
Through all the seasons of the changeful year,
Obsequiously doth take upon herself
To labor for them ; bringing each in turn
The tribute of enjoyment, knowledge, health,
Beauty, or strength ! Such privilege is theirs,
Granted alike in the outset of their course
To both ; and, if that partnership must cease,
I grieve not," to the Pastor here he turned,
" Much as I glory in that child of yours,
Repine not for his cottage-comrade, whom
Belike no higher destiny awaits
Than the old hereditary wish fulfilled ;
The wish for liberty to live—content
With what Heaven grants, and die—in peace of mind,
Within the bosom of his native vale.
At least, whatever fate the noon of life
Reserves for either, sure it is that both
Have been permitted to enjoy the dawn ;
Whether regarded as a jocund time,
That in itself may terminate, or lead
In course of nature to a sober eve.
Both have been fairly dealt with ; looking back
They will allow that justice has in them
Been shown, alike to body and to mind."

He paused, as if revolving in his soul
Some weighty matter ; then, with fervent voice
And an impassioned majesty, exclaimed—

" O for the coming of that glorious time
When, prizes knowledge as her noblest wealth
And best protection, this imperial Realm,

While she exacts allegiance, shall admit
An obligation, on her part, to *teach*
Them who are born to serve her and obey ;
Binding herself by statute to secure
For all the children whom her soil maintains
The rudiments of letters, and inform
The mind with moral and religious truth,
Both understood and practised,—so that none,
However destitute, be left to droop
By timely culture unsustained ; or run
Into a wild disorder ; or be forced
To drudge, through a weary life, without the help
Of intellectual implements and tools ;
A savage horde among the civilized,
A servile band among the lordly free !”
This sacred right the lisping babe proclaims
To be inherent in him, by heaven’s will,
For the protection of his innocence ;
And the rude boy—who, having overpast
The sinless age, by conscience is enrolled,
Yet mutinously knits his angry brow,
And lifts his wilful hand on mischief bent,
Or turns the godlike faculty of speech
To impious use—by process indirect
Declares his due, while he makes known his need.
—This sacred right is fruitlessly announced,
This universal plea in vain addressed,
To eyes and ears of parents who themselves
Did, in the time of their necessity,
Urge it in vain ; and therefore, like a prayer
That from the humblest floor ascends to heaven,
It mounts to reach the State’s parental ear ;
Who, if indeed she own a mother’s heart.

And be not most unfeelingly devoid
Of gratitude to Providence, will grant
The unquestionable good—which, England, safe
From interference of external force,
May grant at leisure; without risk incurred
That what in wisdom for herself she doth,
Others shall e'er be able to undo.

Look! and behold, from Calpe's sunburnt cliffs
To the flat margin of the Baltic sea,
Long-reverenced titles cast away as weeds;
Laws overturned; and territory split,
Like fields of ice rent by the polar wind,
And forced to join in less obnoxious shapes
Which, ere they gain consistence, by a gust
Of the same breath are shattered and destroyed.
Meantime the sovereignty of these fair Isles
Remains entire and indivisible:
And, if that ignorance were removed, which breeds
Within the compass of their several shores
Dark discontent, or loud commotion, each
Might still preserve the beautiful repose
Of heavenly bodies shining in their spheres.
—The discipline of slavery is unknown
Among us,—hence the more do we require
The discipline of virtue; order else
Cannot subsist, nor confidence, nor peace.
Thus, duties rising out of good possest
And prudent caution needful to avert
Impending evil, equally require
That the whole people should be taught and trained.
So shall licentiousness and black resolve
Be rooted out, and virtuous habits take

Their place : and genuine piety descend,
Like an inheritance, from age to age.

With such foundations laid, avaunt the fear
Of numbers crowded on their native soil,
To the prevention of all healthful growth
Through mutual injury ! Rather in the law
Of increase, and the mandate from above
Rejoice !—and ye have special cause for joy.
For, as the element of air affords
An easy passage to the industrious bees
Fraught with their burthens ; and a way as smooth
For those ordained to take their sounding flight
From the thronged hive, and settle where they list
In fresh abodes—their labor to renew ;
So the wide waters, open to the power,
The will, the instincts, and appointed needs
Of Britain, do invite her to cast off
Her swarms, and in succession send them forth ;
Bound to establish new communities
On every shore whose aspect favors hope
Or bold adventure ; promising to skill
And perseverance their deserved reward.

Yes," he continued, kindling as he spake,
" Change wide, and deep, and silently performed,
This Land shall witness ; and as days roll on,
Earth's universal frame shall feel the effect ;
Even till the smallest habitable rock,
Beaten by lonely billows, hear the songs
Of humanized society ; and bloom
With civil arts, that shall breathe forth their fragrance,
A grateful tribute to all-ruling Heaven.

From culture, unexclusively bestowed
On Albion's noble Race in freedom born,
Expect these mighty issues : from the pains
And faithful care of unambitious schools
Instructing simple childhood's ready ear :
Thence look for these magnificent results !
—Vast the circumference of hope—and ye
Are at its centre, British Lawgivers ;
Ah ! sleep not there in shame ! Shall Wisdom's voice
From out the bosom of these troubled times
Repeat the dictates of her calmer mind,
And shall the venerable halls ye fill
Refuse to echo the sublime decree ?
Trust not to partial care a general good ;
Transfer not to futurity a work
Of urgent need.—Your Country must complete
Her glorious destiny. Begin even now,
Now, when oppression, like the Egyptian plague
Of darkness, stretched o'er guilty Europe makes
The brightness more conspicuous that invests
The happy Island where ye think and act ;
Now, when destruction is a prime pursuit,
Show to the wretched nations for what end
The powers of civil polity were given."

Abruptly here, but with a graceful air,
The Sage broke off. No sooner had he ceased
Than, looking forth, the gentle Lady said,
“ Behold the shades of afternoon have fallen
Upon this flowery slope ; and see—beyond—
The silvery lake is streaked with placid blue ;
As if preparing for the peace of evening.
How temptingly the landscape shines ! The air

Breathes invitation ; easy is the walk
To the lake's margin, where a boat lies moored
Under a sheltering tree."—Upon this hint
We rose together : all were pleased ; but most
The beauteous girl, whose cheek was flushed with joy.
Light as a sunbeam glides along the hills
She vanished—eager to impart the scheme
To her loved brother and his shy compeer.
—Now was there bustle in the Vicar's house
And earnest preparation.—Forth we went,
And down the vale along the streamlet's edge
Pursued our way, a broken company,
Mute or conversing, single or in pairs.
Thus having reached a bridge, that overarched
The hasty rivulet where it lay becalmed
In a deep pool, by happy chance we saw
A two-fold image ; on a grassy bank
A snow-white ram, and in the crystal flood
Another and the same ! Most beautiful,
On the green turf, with his imperial front
Shaggy and bold, and wreathed horns superb,
The breathing creature stood ; as beautiful,
Beneath him, showed his shadowy counterpart.
Each had his glowing mountains, each his sky,
And each seemed centre of his own fair world :
Antipodes unconscious of each other,
Yet, in partition, with their several spheres,
Blended in perfect stillness, to our sight !

" Ah ! what a pity were it to disperse,
Or to disturb, so fair a spectacle,
And yet a breath can do it !"

These few words
The Lady whispered, while we stood and gazed
Gathered together, all in still delight,
Not without awe. Thence passing on, she said
In like low voice to my particular ear,
“ I love to hear that eloquent old Man
Pour forth his meditations, and descant
On human life from infancy to age.
How pure his spirit! in what vivid hues
His mind gives back the various forms of things,
Caught in their fairest, happiest, attitude!
While he is speaking, I have power to see
Even as he sees; but when his voice hath ceased,
Then, with a sigh, sometimes I feel, as now,
That combinations so serene and bright
Cannot be lasting in a world like ours,
Whose highest beauty, beautiful as it is,
Like that reflected in yon quiet pool,
Seems but a fleeting sunbeam’s gift, whose peace
The sufferance only of a breath of air!”

More had she said—but sportive shouts were heard
Sent from the jocund hearts of those two Boys,
Who, bearing each a basket on his arm,
Down the green field came tripping after us.
With caution we embarked; and now the pair
For prouder service were address; but each,
Wishful to leave an opening for my choice,
Dropped the light oar his eager hand had seized.
Thanks given for that becoming courtesy,
Their place I took—and for a grateful office
Pregnant with recollections of the time
When, on thy bosom, spacious Windermere

A Youth, I practised this delightful art ;
Tossed on the waves alone, or 'mid a crew
Of joyous comrades. Soon as the reedy marge
Was cleared, I dipped, with arms accordant, oars
Free from obstruction ; and the boat advanced
Through crystal water, smoothly as a hawk,
That, disentangled from the shady boughs
Of some thick wood, her place of covert, cleaves
With correspondent wings the abyss of air.
—“Observe,” the Vicar said, “yon rocky isle
With birch-trees fringed ; my hand shall guide the
helm,
While thitherward we shape our course ; or while
We seek that other, on the western shore ;
Where the bare columns of those lofty firs,
Supporting gracefully a massy dome
Of sombre foliage, seem to imitate
A Grecian temple rising from the Deep.”

“ Turn where we may,” said I, “ we cannot err
In this delicious region.”—Cultured slopes,
Wild tracts of forest-ground, and scattered groves,
And mountains bare, or clothed with ancient woods,
Surrounded us ; and, as we held our way
Along the level of the glassy flood,
They ceased not to surround us ; change of place,
From kindred features diversely combined,
Producing change of beauty ever new.
—Ah ! that such beauty, varying in the light
Of living nature, cannot be portrayed
By words, nor by the pencil’s silent skill :
But is the property of him alone
Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,

And in his mind recorded it with love !
Suffice it, therefore, if the rural Muse
Vouchsafe sweet influence, while her Poet speaks
Of trivial occupations well devised,
And unsought pleasures springing up by chance ;
As if some friendly Genius had ordained
That, as the day thus far had been enriched
By acquisition of sincere delight
The same should be continued to its close.

One spirit animating old and young,
A gipsy-fire we kindled on the shore
Of the fair Isle with birch-trees fringed—and there,
Merrily seated in a ring, partook
A choice repast—served by our young companions
With rival earnestness and kindred glee.
Launched from our hands the smooth stone skimmed
the lake ;
With shouts we raised the echoes ; stiller sounds
The lovely Girl supplied—a simple song,
Whose low tones reached not to the distant rocks
To be repeated thence, but gently sank
Into our hearts ; and charmed the peaceful flood.
Rapaciously we gathered flowery spoils
From land and water ; lilies of each hue—
Golden and white, that float upon the waves,
And court the wind ; and leaves of that shy plant,
(Her flowers were shed), the lily of the vale,
That loves the ground, and from the sun withholds
Her pensive beauty ; from the breeze her sweets.

Such product, and such pastime, did the place
And season yield ; but, as we re-embarked,

Leaving, in quest of other scenes, the shore
Of that wild spot, the Solitary said
In a low voice, yet careless who might hear,
“ The fire, that burned so brightly to our wish,
Where is it now?—Deserted on the beach—
Dying, or dead! Nor shall the fanning breeze
Revive its ashes. What care we for this,
Whose ends are gained? Behold an emblem here
Of one day’s pleasure, and all mortal joys!
And, in this unpremeditated slight
Of that which is no longer needed, see
The common course of human gratitude!”

This plaintive note disturbed not the repose
Of the still evening. Right across the lake
Our pinnace moves; then, coasting creek and bay,
Glades we behold, and into thickets peep,
Where couch the spotted deer; or raised our eyes
To shaggy steeps on which the careless goat
Browsed by the side of dashing waterfalls;
And thus the bark, meandering with the shore,
Pursued her voyage, till a natural pier
Of jutting rock invited us to land.

Alert to follow as the Pastor led,
We climb a green hill’s side; and, as we climb,
The Valley, opening out her bosom, gave
Fair prospect, intercepted less and less,
O’er the flat meadows and indented coast
Of the smooth lake, in compass seen:—far off,
And yet conspicuous, stood the old Church-tower,
In majesty presiding over fields
And habitations seemingly preserved

From all intrusion of the restless world
By rocks impassable and mountains huge.

Soft heath this elevated spot supplied,
And choice of moss-clad stones, whereon we couched
Or sate reclined ; admiring quietly
The general aspect of the scene ; but each
Not seldom over anxious to make known
His own discoveries ; or to favorite points
Directing notice, merely from a wish
To impart a joy, imperfect while unshared.
That rapturous moment never shall I forget
When these particular interests were effaced
From every mind !—Already had the sun,
Sinking with less than ordinary state,
Attained his western bound ; but rays of light—
Now suddenly diverging from the orb
Retired behind the mountain tops or veiled
By the dense air—shot upwards to the crown
Of the blue firmament—aloft, and wide ;
And multitudes of little floating clouds,
Through their ethereal texture pierced—ere we,
Who saw, of change were conscious—had become
Vivid as fire ; clouds separately poised,—
Innumerable multitude of forms
Scattered through half the circle of the sky ;
And giving back, and shedding each on each,
With prodigal communion, the bright hues
Which from the unapparent fount of glory
They had imbibed, and ceased not to receive.
That which the heavens displayed, the liquid deep
Repeated ; but with unity sublime !

While from the grassy mountain's open side
We gazed, in silence hushed, with eyes intent
On the resplendent spectacle, diffused
Through earth, sky, water, and all visible space,
The Priest in holy transport thus exclaimed :

“Eternal Spirit! universal God!
Power inaccessible to human thought,
Save by degrees and steps which thou hast deigned
To furnish; for this effluence of thyself,
To the infirmity of mortal sense
Vouchsafed; this local transitory type
Of thy paternal splendors, and the pomp
Of those who fill thy courts in highest heaven,
The radiant Cherubim;—accept the thanks
Which we, thy humble Creatures, here convened,
Presume to offer; we, who—from the breast
Of the frail earth, permitted to behold
The faint reflections only of thy face—
Are yet exalted, and in soul adore!
Such as they are who in thy presence stand
Unsullied, incorruptible, and drink
Imperishable majesty streamed forth
From thy empyreal throne, the elect of earth
Shall be—divested at the appointed hour
Of all dishonor, cleansed from mortal stain.
Accomplish, then, their number; and conclude
Time’s weary course! Or if, by thy decree,
The consummation that will come by stealth
Be yet far distant, let thy Word prevail,
Oh! let thy Word prevail, to take away
The sting of human nature. Spread the law,
As it is written in thy holy book,

Throughout all lands : let every nation hear
The high behest, and every heart obey ;
Both for the love of purity, and hope
Which it affords, to such as do thy will
And persevere in good, that they shall rise.
To have a nearer view of thee, in heaven.

—Father of good ! this prayer in bounty grant,
In mercy grant it, to thy wretched sons.
Then, nor till then, shall persecution cease,
And cruel wars expire. The way is marked,
The guide appointed, and the ransom paid.
Alas ! the nations, who of yore received
These tidings, and in Christian temples meet
The sacred truth to acknowledge, linger still ;
Preferring bonds and darkness to a state
Of holy freedom, by redeeming love
Proffered to all, while yet on earth detained.

So fare the many ; and the thoughtful few,
Who in the anguish of their souls bewail
This dire perverseness, cannot choose but ask,
Shall it endure ?—Shall enmity and strife,
Falsehood and guile, be left to sow their seed ;
And the kind never perish ? Is the hope
Fallacious, or shall righteousness obtain
A peaceable dominion, wide as earth,
And ne'er to fail ? Shall that blest day arrive
When they, whose choice or lot it is to dwell
In crowded cities, without fear shall live
Studious of mutual benefit ; and he,
Whom morn awakens, among dews and flowers
Of every clime, to till the lonely field,
Be happy in himself ?—The law of faith

Working through love, such conquest shall it gain,
Such triumph over sin and guilt achieve ?
Almighty Lord, thy further grace impart !
And with that help the wonder shall be seen
Fulfilled, the hope accomplished ; and thy praise
Be sung with transport and unceasing joy.

Once," and with mild demeanor, as he spake,
On us the venerable Pastor turned
His beaming eye that had been raised to Heaven,
" Once, while the Name, Jehovah, was a sound
Within the circuit of this sea-girt isle
Unheard, the savage nations bowed the head
To Gods delighting in remorseless deeds ;
Gods which themselves had fashioned, to promote
Ill purposes, and flatter foul desires.
Then, in the bosom of yon mountain-cove,
To those inventions of corrupted man
Mysterious rites were solemnized ; and there—
Amid impending rocks and gloomy woods—
Of those terrific Idols some received
Such dismal service, that the loudest voice
Of the swollen cataracts (which now are heard
Soft murmuring) was too weak to overcome,
Though aided by wild winds, the groans and shrieks
Of human victims, offered up to appease
Or to propitiate. And, if living eyes
Had visionary faculties to see
The thing that hath been as the thing that is,
Aghast we might behold this crystal Mere
Bedimmed with smoke, in wreaths voluminous,
Flung from the body of devouring fires,
To Taranis erected on the heights

By priestly hands, for sacrifice performed
Exultingly, in view of open day
And full assemblage of a barbarous host ;
Or to Andates, female Power ! who gave
(For so they fancied) glorious victory.
—A few rude monuments of mountain-stone
Survive ; all else is swept away.—How bright
The appearances of things ! From such, how changed
The existing worship ; and with those compared,
The worshippers how innocent and blest !
So wide the difference, a willing mind
Might almost think, at this affecting hour,
That paradise, the lost abode of man,
Was raised again : and to a happy few
In its original beauty, here restored.

Whence but from thee, the true and only God,
And from the faith derived through Him who bled
Upon the cross, this marvellous advance
Of good from evil ; as if one extreme
Were left, the other gained.—O ye, who come
To kneel devoutly in yon reverend Pile,
Called to such office by the peaceful sound
Of Sabbath bells ; and ye, who sleep in earth
All cares forgotten, round its hallowed walls !
For you, in presence of this little band
Gathered together on the green hill-side,
Your Pastor is emboldened to prefer
Vocal thanksgivings to the eternal King ;
Whose love, whose counsel, whose commands, have
made
Your very poorest rich in peace of thought
And in good works ; and him, who is endowed

With scantiest knowledge, master of all truth
Which the salvation of his soul requires.
Conscious of that abundant favor showered
On you, the children of my humble care,
And this dear land, our country, while on earth
We sojourn, have I lifted up my soul,
Joy giving voice to fervent gratitude.
These barren rocks, your stern inheritance ;
These fertile fields, that recompense your pains ;
The shadowy vale, the sunny mountain-top ;
Woods waving in the wind their lofty heads,
Or hushed ; the roaring waters, and the still—
They see the offering of my lifted hands,
They hear my lips present their sacrifice,
They know if I be silent, morn or even :
For, though in whispers speaking, the full heart
Will find a vent ; and thought is praise to him,
Audible praise, to thee, omniscient Mind,
From whom all gifts descend, all blessings flow !

This vesper-service closed, without delay,
From that exalted station to the plain
Descending, we pursued our homeward course.
In mute composure, o'er the shadowy lake,
Under a faded sky. No trace remained
Of those celestial splendors ; grey the vault—
Pure, cloudless, ether ; and the star of eve
Was wanting ; but inferior lights appeared
Faintly, too faint almost for sight ; and some
Above the darkened hills stood boldly forth
In twinkling lustre, ere the boat attained
Her mooring-place ; where, to the sheltering tree,
Our youthful Voyagers bound fast her prow,

With prompt yet careful hands. This done, we paced
The dewy fields; but ere the Vicar's door
Was reached, the Solitary checked his steps;
Then, intermingling thanks, on each bestowed
A farewell salutation; and, the like
Receiving, took the slender path that leads
To the one cottage in the lonely dell:
But turned not without welcome promise made
That he would share the pleasures and pursuits
Of yet another summer's day, not loth
To wander with us through the fertile vales,
And o'er the mountain-wastes. "Another sun,"
Said he, "shall shine upon us, ere we part;
Another sun, and peradventure more;
If time, with free consent, be yours to give,
And season favors."

To enfeebled Power,
From this communion with uninjured Minds,
What renovation had been brought; and what
Degree of healing to a wounded spirit,
Dejected, and habitually disposed
To seek, in degradation of the Kind,
Excuse and solace for her own defects;
How far those erring notions were reformed;
And whether aught, of tendency as good
And pure, from further intercourse ensued;
This—if delightful hopes, as heretofore,
Inspire the serious song, and gentle Hearts
Cherish, and lofty Minds approve the past—
My future labors may not leave untold.

N O T E S.

NOTE 1.—PAGE 13.

*'Descend, prophetic Spirit, that inspirerest
The human soul,' &c.*

*'Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic Soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come.'*
Shakespeare's Sonnets.

NOTE 2.—P. 28.

'— much did he see of Men.'

At the risk of giving a shock to the prejudices of artificial society, I have ever been ready to pay homage to the aristocracy of nature; under a conviction that vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste. It may still, however, be satisfactory to have prose testimony how far a Character, employed for purposes of imagination, is founded upon general fact. I, therefore, subjoin an extract from an author who had opportunities of being well acquainted with a class of men, from whom my own personal knowledge emboldened me to draw this portrait.

'We learn from Cæsar and other Roman Writers, that the travelling merchants who frequented Gaul and other barbarous countries, either newly conquered by the Roman arms, or bordering on the Roman conquest, were ever the first to make the inhabitants of those countries familiarly acquainted with the Roman modes of life, and to inspire them with an inclination to follow the Roman fashions, and to enjoy Roman conveniences. In North America, travelling merchants from the Settlements have done and continue to do much more toward civilizing the Indian natives, than all the missionaries, papist or protestant, who have ever been sent among them.

It is farther to be observed, for the credit of this most useful class of men, that they commonly contribute, by their personal manners, no less than by the sale of their wares, to the refinement of the people among whom they travel. Their dealings form them to great quickness of wit and acuteness of judgment. Having constant occasion to recommend themselves and their goods, they acquire habits of the most obliging attention, and the most insinuating address. As in their peregrinations they have opportunity of contemplating the manners of various men and

various cities, they become eminently skilled in the knowledge of the world. *As they wander, each alone, through thinly-inhabited districts, they form habits of reflection and of sublime contemplation.* With all these qualifications, no wonder, that they should often be, in remote parts of the country, the best mirrors of fashion, and censors of manners; and should contribute much to polish the roughness, and soften the rusticity of our peasantry. It is not more than twenty or thirty years since a young man going from any part of Scotland to England, of purpose to *carry the pack*, was considered as going to lead the life and acquire the fortune of a gentleman. When, after twenty years' absence, in that honorable line of employment, he returned with his acquisitions to his native country, he was regarded as a gentleman to all intents and purposes.'

Heron's Journey in Scotland, Vol. I. p. 89.

NOTE 3.—P. 87.

'*Lost in unsearchable Eternity!*'

Since this paragraph was composed, I have read with so much pleasure, in Burnet's Theory of the Earth, a passage expressing corresponding sentiments, excited by objects of a similar nature, that I cannot forbear to transcribe it.

'Siquid verò Natura nobis dedit spectaculum, in hac tollure, verè gratum, et philosophi dignum, id semel mihi configisse arbitror; cùm ex celstissimā rupe speculabundus ad oram maris Mediterranei, hinc sequor caruleum, illinc tractus Alpinos prospexi; nihil quidem magis dispar aut dissimile, nec in suo genere, magis egregium et singulare. Hoc theatrum ego facile præstulerim Romanis cunctis, Græcisive; atque id quod natura hic spectandum exhibet, scenicis ludis omnibus, aut amphitheatri certaminibus. Nahil hic elegans aut venosum, sed ingens et magnificum, et quod placet magnitudine suā et quādam specie im mensitatis. Hic intuebor maris aquabilem superficiem, usque et usque diffusam, quantum maximum oculorum scies ferir potuit; illinc disruptissimam terrae faciem, et vastas moles variè elevatas aut depressoas, erectas, propendentes, reclinatas, conservatas, omni situ inæquali et turbido. Placuit, ex hac parte, Natura unitas et simplicitas, et inexhausta quedam planities; ex alterā, multiformis confusio magnorum corporum, et insane rerum strages: quas cùm intuebor, non urbis alicujus aut oppidi, sed contracti mundi rudera, ante oculos habere mihi visus sum.'

In singulis ferè montibus erat aliquid insolens et mirabile, sed praeceteris mihi placebat illa, quā sedebam, rupes; erat maxima et altissima, et quā terram respiciebat, molliori asconce altitudinem suam disseminabat: quā verò mare, horrendā præcepit, et quasi ad perpendicularum facta, instar parietis. Præterea facies illa marina adeo erat lœvius ac uniformis (quod in rupibus aliquando observare licet) ac si sciens fulisset a summo ad unum, in illo piano; vel terræ motu aliquo, aut fulmine, divisa.

Ima pars rupis erat cava, recessusque habuit, et saxeos specus, evanies in vacuum montem; sive naturā pridem factos, sive excesso mari, et

undarum crebris ictibus: In hoc enim cum impetu raeabant et fragore,
vestuantis maris fluctus; quo iterum spumantes reddidit antrum, et quasi
ab imo ventre evonavit.

Dextrum jatus montis erat præruptum, aspero saxo et mudâ caute;
sinistrum non adeo neglexerat Natura, arboribus utpote ornatum: et pro-
pe pedem montis rivus limpida aquæ prorupit; qui cùm vicinam vallim
irrigaverat, lento moto serpens, et per varios meandros, quasi ad pro-
trahendam vitam, in magno mari absorptus subito perit. Denique in
summo vertice promontori, comminodè eminebat saxum, cui insidebam
contemplabundus. Vale augusta sedes, Rege digna: Augusta rupes
semper mihi memoranda!" P. 89. *Telluris Theoria sacra, &c. Editio
secunda.*

NOTE 4.—P. 113.

Of Mississippi, or that Northern Stream.

"A man is supposed to improve by going out into the *World*, by visiting *London*. Artificial man does; he extends with his sphere; but, alas! that sphere is microscopic; it is formed of minutiae, and he renders his genuine vision to the artist, in order to embrace it in his ken. His bodily senses grow acute, even to barren and inhuman prurience; while his mental become proportionally obtuse. The reverse is the *Man of Mind*: he who is placed in the sphere of Nature and of God, might be a mock at Tattersall's and Brooks's, and a sneer at St. James's: he would certainly be swallowed alive by the first *Pizarro* that crossed him—but when he walks along the river of Amazons; when he rests his eye on the unrivalled Andes; when he measures the long and watered savannah; or contemplates, from a sudden promontory, the distant, vast Pacific—and feels himself a freeman in this vast theatre, and commanding each ready produced fruit of this wilderness, and each progeny of this stream—his exaltation is not less than imperial. He is as gentle, too, as he is great: his emotions of tenderness keep pace with his elevation of sentiment; for he says, 'These were made by a good Being, who, unsought by me, placed me here to enjoy them.' He becomes at once a child and a king. His mind is in himself; from hence he argues, and from hence he acts, and he argues unerringly, and acts magisterially: his mind in himself is also in his God; and therefore he loves, and therefore he soars." From the notes upon *The Hurricane*, a Poem, by *William Gilbert*.

The Reader, I am sure, will thank me for the above quotation, which, though from a strange book, is one of the finest passages of modern English prose.

NOTE 5.—P. 121.

*"Tis, by comparison, an easy task
Earth to despise," &c.*

See, upon this subject, Paxter's most interesting review of his own opinions and sentiments in the decline of life. It may be found (lately reprinted) in Dr. Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Biography*.

NOTE 6.—P. 123.

*'Alas ! the endowment of immortal Power,
Is matched unequally with custom, time,' &c.*

This subject is treated at length in the ode—*Intimations of Immortality.*

NOTE 7.—P. 127.

'Knowing the heart of Man is set to be.' &c.

The passage quoted from Daniel is taken from a poem addressed to the Lady Margaret, Countess of Cumberland, and the two last lines, printed in italics, are by him translated from Seneca. The whole Poem is very beautiful. I will transcribe four stanzas from it, as they contain an admirable picture of the state of a wise Man's mind in a time of public commotion.

Nor is he moved with all the thunder-cracks
Of tyrant's threats, or with the surly brow
Of Power, that proudly sits on others' crimes ;
Charged with more crying sins than those he checks.
The storms of sad confusion that may grow
Up in the present for the coming times,
Appal not him ; that hath no side at all,
But of himself, and knows the worst can fall.

Although his heart (so near allied to earth)
Cannot but pity the perplexed state
Of troublous and distressed mortality,
That thus make way unto the ugly birth
Of their own sorrows, and do still beget
Affliction upon Imbecility :
Yet seeing thus the course of things must run,
He looks thereon not strange, but as fore-done.

And whilst distraught ambition compasses,
And is encompassed, while as craft deceives,
And deceived : whilst man doth ranseck man,
And builds on blood, and rises by distress ;
And th' Inheritance of desolation leaves
To great-expecting hopes : He looks thereon,
As from the shore of peace, with unwet eye,
And bears no venture in Impiety.

Thus, Lady, fares that man that hath prepared
A rest for his desires ; and sees all things
Beneath him ; and hath learned this book of man,
Full of the notes of frailty ; and compared
The best of glory with her sufferings :
By whom, I see, you labor all you can
To plant your heart ! and set your thoughts as near
His glorious mansion as your power can bear.

NOTE 8.—P. 182.

*'Or rather, as we stand on holy earth
And have the dead around us.'*

Lao. You, Sir, could help me to the history
Of half these graves?

Priest. For eight-score winters past,
With what I've witnessed, and with what I've heard,
Perhaps I might; — — — —
By turning o'er these hillocks one by one,
We two could travel, Sir, through a strange round;
Yet all in the broad highway of the world.

See The Brothers.

NOTE 9.—P. 192.

'And suffering Nature grieved that one should die.'
Southey's Retrospect.

NOTE 10.—P. 194.

'And whence that tribute? wherefore these regards?'

The sentiments and opinions here uttered are in unison with those expressed in the following Essay upon Epitaphs, which was furnished by me for Mr. Coleridge's periodical work, *The Friend*; and as they are dictated by a spirit congenial to that which pervades this and the two succeeding books, the sympathizing reader will not be disappointed to see the Essay here annexed.

ESSAY UPON EPITAPHS.

It needs scarcely be said, that an Epitaph presupposes a Monument, upon which it is to be engraven. Almost all nations have wished that certain external signs should point out the places where their dead are interred. Among savage tribes unacquainted with letters this has mostly been done either by rude stones placed near the graves, or by mounds of earth raised over them. This custom proceeded obviously from a twofold desire; first, to guard the remains of the deceased from irreverent approach or from savage violation: and, secondly, to preserve their memory. 'Never any,' says Camden, 'neglected burial but some savage nations; as the Bactrians, which cast their dead to the dogs; some varlet philosophers, as Diogenes, who desired to be devoured of fishes; some dissolute courtiers, as Meccenas, who was wont to say, *Non tumulum curio; sepelit natura relicto.*

I'm careless of a grave:—Nature her dead will save.'

As soon as nations had learned the use of letters, epitaphs were inscribed upon these monuments; in order that their intention might be more surely and adequately fulfilled. I have derived monuments and

epitaphs from two sources of feeling : but these do in fact resolve themselves into one. The invention of epitaphs, Weever, in his Discourse of Funeral Monuments, says rightly, 'proceeded from the preage or fore-feeling of immortality, implanted in all men naturally, and is referred to the scholars of Linus the Theban poet, who flourished about the year of the world two thousand seven hundred ; who first bewailed this Linus their Master, when he was slain, in doleful verse, then called of him Cœlina, afterwards Epitaphia, for that they were first sung at burials, after engraved upon the sepulchres.'

And, verily, without the consciousness of a principle of immortality in the human soul, Man could never have had awakened in him the desire to live in the remembrance of his fellows : mere love, or the yearning of kind towards kind, could not have produced it. The dog or horse perishes in the field, or in the stall, by the side of his companions, and is incapable of anticipating the sorrow with which his surrounding associates shall bemoan his death, or pine for his loss ; he cannot pre-conceive this regret, he can form no thought of it ; and therefore cannot possibly have a desire to leave such regret or remembrance behind him. Add to the principle of love which exists in the inferior animals, the faculty of reason which exists in Man alone ; will the conjunction of these account for the desire ? Doubtless it is a necessary consequence of this conjunction ; yet not I think as a direct result, but only to be come at through an intermediate thought, viz. that of an intimation or assurance within us, that some part of our nature is imperishable. At least the precedence, in order of birth, of one feeling to the other, is unquestionable. If we look back upon the days of childhood, we shall find that the time is not in remembrance when, with respect to our own individual Being, the mind was without this assurance : whereas, the wish to be remembered by our friends or kindred after death, or even in absence, is, as we shall discover, a sensation that does not form itself till the *social* feelings have been developed, and the reason has connected itself with a wide range of objects. Forlorn, and cut off from communication with the best part of his nature, must that man be, who should derive the sense of immortality, as it exists in the mind of a child, from the same unthinking gaiety or liveliness of animal spirits with which the lamb in the meadow, or any other irrational creature is endowed ; who should ascribe it, in short, to blank ignorance in the child ; to an inability arising from the imperfect state of his faculties to come, in any point of his being, into contact with a notion of death ; or to an unreflecting acquiescence in what had been instilled into him ! Has such an unfolder of the mysteries of nature, though he may have forgotten his former self, ever noticed the early, obstinate, and unanswerable inquisitiveness of children upon the subject of origination ? This single fact proves outwardly the monstrousness of those suppositions : for, if we had no direct external testimony that the minds of very young children meditate feelingly upon death and immortality, these inquiries, which we all know they are perpetually making concerning the *whence*, do necessarily include correspondent habits of interrogation concerning the *whither*. Origin and tendency are notions inseparably co-relative. Never did a child stand by the side of a running stream, pondering within himself what power was the feeder of the

perpetual current, from what never-wearied sources the body of water was supplied, but he must have been inevitably propelled to follow this question by another: "Towards what abyss is it in progress? what receptacle can contain the mighty influx?" And the spirit of the answer must have been, though the word might be sea or ocean, accompanied perhaps with an image gathered from a map, or from the real object in nature—these might have been the *letter*, but the *spirit* of the answer must have been *as* inevitably,—a receptacle without bounds or dimensions;—nothing less than infinity. We may, then, be justified in asserting, that the sense of immortality, if not a co-existent and twin birth with Reason, is among the earliest of her offspring: and we may further assert, that from these conjoined, and under their countenance, the human affections are gradually formed, and opened out. This is not the place to enter into the recesses of these investigations; but the subject requires me here to make a plain avowal, that, for my own part, it is to me inconceivable, that the sympathies of love towards each other, which grow with our growth, could ever attain any new strength, or even preserve the old, after we had received from the outward sense the impression of death, and were in the habit of having that impression daily renewed and its accompanying feeling brought home to ourselves, and to those we love: if the same were not counteracted by those communications with our internal Being, which are anterior to all these experiences, and with which revelation coincides, and has through that coincidence alone (for otherwise it could not possess it) a power to affect us. I confess, with me the conviction is absolute, that, if the impression and sense of death were not thus counterbalanced, such a hollowness would pervade the whole system of things, such a want of correspondence and consistency, a disproportion so astounding ~~betwixt~~ means and ends, that there could be no repose, no joy. Were we to grow up unfostered by this genial warmth, a frost would chill the spirit, so penetrating and powerful, that there could be no motions of the life of love; and infinitely less could we have any wish to be remembered after we had passed away from a world in which each man had moved about like a shadow.—If, then, in a creature endowed with the faculties of foresight and reason, the social affections could not have unfolded themselves uncountenanced by the faith that Man is an immortal being; and if, consequently, neither could the individual dying have had a desire to survive in the remembrance of his fellows, nor on their side could they have felt a wish to preserve for future times vestiges of the departed, it follows, as a final inference, that without the belief in immortality, wherein these several desires originate, neither monuments nor epitaphs, in affectionate or laudatory commemoration of the deceased, could have existed in the world.

Simonides, it is related, upon landing in a strange country, found the cors of an unknown person lying by the sea-side; he buried it, and was honored throughout Greece for the piety of that act. Another ancient Philosopher, chancing to fix his eyes upon a dead body, regarded the same with slight, if not with contempt; saying, "See the shell of the flown bird!" But it is not to be supposed that the moral and tender-hearted Simonides was incapable of the lofty movements of thought, to

which that other Sage gave way at the moment while his soul was intent only upon the indestructible being ; nor, on the other hand, that he, in whose sight a lifeless human body was of no more value than the worthless shell from which the living fowl had departed, would not, in a different mood of mind, have been affected by those earthly considerations which had incited the philosophic Poet to the performance of that pious duty. And with regard to this latter we may be assured that, if he had been destitute of the capability of communing with the more exalted thoughts that appertain to human nature, he would have cared no more for the corse of the stranger than for the dead body of a seal or porpoise which might have been cast up by the waves. We respect the corporeal frame of Man, not merely because it is the habitation of a rational, but of an immortal Soul. Each of these Sages was in sympathy with the best feelings of our nature ; feelings which, though they seem opposite to each other, have another and a finer connection than that of contrast. —It is a connection formed through the subtle progress by which, both in the natural and the moral world, qualities pass insensibly into their contraries, and things revolve upon each other. As, in sailing upon the orb of this planet, a voyage towards the regions where the sun sets, conducts gradually to the quarter where we have been accustomed to behold it come forth at its rising ; and, in like manner, a voyage towards the east, the birth-place in our imagination of the morning, leads finally to the quarter where the sun is last seen when he departs from our eyes ; so the contemplative Soul, travelling in the direction of mortality, advances to the country of everlasting life ; and, in like manner, may she continue to explore those cheerful tracts, till she is brought back, for her advantage and benefit, to the land of transitory things—of sorrow and of tears.

On a midway point, therefore, which commands the thoughts and feelings of the two Sages whom we have represented in contrast, does the Author of that species of composition, the laws of which it is our present purpose to explain, take his stand. Accordingly, recurring to the twofold desire of guarding the remains of the deceased and preserving their memory, it may be said that a sepulchral monument is a tribute to a man as a human being ; and that an epitaph (in the ordinary meaning attached to the word) includes this general feeling and something more ; and is a record to preserve the memory of the dead, as a tribute due to his individual worth, for a satisfaction to the sorrowing hearts of the survivors, and for the common benefit of the living : which record is to be accomplished, not in a general manner, but, where it can, in *close connection with the bodily remains of the deceased* : and these, it may be added, among the modern nations of Europe, are deposited within, or contiguous to, their places of worship. In ancient times, as is well known, it was the custom to bury the dead beyond the walls of towns and cities ; and among the Greeks and Romans they were frequently interred by the way-sides.

I could here pause with pleasure, and invite the Reader to indulge with me in contemplation of the advantages which must have attended such a practice. We might ruminiate upon the beauty which the monu-

ments, thus placed, must have borrowed from the surrounding images of nature—from the trees, the wild flowers, from a stream running perhaps within sight or hearing, from the beaten road stretching its weary length hard by. Many tender similitudes must these objects have presented to the mind of the traveller leaning upon one of the tombs, or reposing in the coolness of its shade, whether he had halted from weariness or in compliance with the invitation, ‘Pause, Traveller!’ so often found upon the monuments. And to its epitaph also must have been supplied strong appeals to visible appearances or immediate impressions, lively and affecting analogies of life as a journey—death as a sleep overcoming the tired wayfarer—of misfortune as a storm that falls suddenly upon him—of beauty as a flower that passeth away, or of innocent pleasure as one that may be gathered—of virtue that standeth firm as a rock against the beating waves ;—of hope ‘undermined insensibly like the poplar by the side of the river that has fed it,’ or blasted in a moment like a pine-tree by the stroke of lightning upon the mountain-top—of admonitions and heart-stirring remembrances, like a refreshing breeze that comes without warning, or the taste of the waters of an unexpected fountain. These, and similar suggestions, must have given, formerly, to the language of the senseless stone a voice enforced and endeared by the benignity of that nature with which it was in unison.—We, in modern times, have lost much of these advantages ; and they are but in a small degree counterbalanced to the inhabitants of large towns and cities, by the custom of depositing the dead within, or contiguous to, their places of worship ; however splendid or imposing may be the appearance of those edifices, or however interesting or salutary the recollections associated with them. Even were it not true that tombs lose their monitory virtue when thus obstructed upon the notice of men occupied with the cares of the world, and too often sullied and defiled by those cares, yet still, when death is in our thoughts, nothing can make amends for the want of the soothing influences of nature, and for the absence of those types of renovation and decay, which the fields and woods offer to the notice of the serious and contemplative mind. To feel the force of this sentiment, let a man only compare in imagination the unsightly manner in which our monuments are crowded together in the busy, noisy, unclean, and almost grassless church-yard of a large town, with the still seclusion of a Turkish cemetery, in some remote place ; and yet further sanctified by the grove of cypress in which it is embosomed. Thoughts in the same temper as these have already been expressed with true sensibility by an ingenuous Poet of the present day. The subject of his poem is “All Saints Church, Derby :” he has been deplored the forbidding and unseemly appearance of its burial-ground, and uttering a wish, that in past times the practice had been adopted of interring the inhabitants of large towns in the country.—

‘Then, in some rural, calm, sequoistered spot,
Where healing Nature her benignant look
Ne’er changes, save at that lorn season, when,
With tresses drooping o’er her sable stole,
She yearly mourns the mortal doom of man,

Her noblest work, (so Israel's virgins erst,
With annual moan upon the mountains wept
Their fairest gone,) there in that rural scene,
So placid, so congenial to the wish
The Christian feels, of peaceful rest within
The silent grave, I would have stayed :

* * * * *

—wandered forth, where the cold dew of heaven
Lay on the humbler graves around, what time
The pale moon gazed upon the turfy mounds,
Pensive, as though like me, in lonely muse,
'T were brooding on the dead inhumed beneath.
There while with him, the holy man of Uz,
O'er human destiny I sympathized,
Counting the long, long periods prophecy
Decrees to roll, ere the great day arrives
Of resurrection, off the blue-eyed Spring
Had met me with her blossoms, as the Dove,
Of old, returned with olive leaf, to cheer
The Patriarch mourning o'er a world destroy'd:
And I would bless her visit; for to me
'T is sweet to trace the consonance that links
As one, the works of Nature and the word
Of God.'—

JOHN EDWARDS.

A village church-yard, lying as it does in the lap of nature, may indeed be most favorably contrasted with that of a town of crowded population ; and sepulture therein combines many of the best tendencies which belong to the mode practised by the Ancients, with others peculiar to itself. The sensations of pious cheerfulness, which attend the celebration of the Sabbath-day in rural places, are profitably chastised by the sight of the graves of kindred and friends, gathered together in that general home towards which the thoughtful yet happy spectators themselves are journeying. Hence a parish-church, in the stillness of the country, is a visible centre of a community of the living and the dead ; a point to which are habitually referred the nearest concerns of both.

As, then, both in cities and in villages, the dead are deposited in close connection with our places of worship, with us the composition of an epitaph naturally turns, still more than among the nations of antiquity, upon the most serious and solemn affections of the human mind ; upon departed worth—upon personal or social sorrow and admiration—upon religion, individual and social—upon time, and upon eternity. Accordingly, it suffices, in ordinary cases, to secure a composition of this kind from causerie, that it contain nothing that shall shock or be inconsistent with this spirit. But, to entitle an epitaph to praise, more than this is necessary. It ought to contain some thought or feeling belonging to the mortal or immortal part of our nature touchingly expressed ; and if that be done, however general or even trite the sentiment may be, every man of pure mind will read the words with pleasure and gratitude.

A husband bewails a wife ; a parent breathes a sigh of disappointed hope over a lost child ; a son utters a sentiment of filial reverence for a departed father or mother ; a friend perhaps inscribes an encomium recording the companionable qualities, or the solid virtues, of the tenant of the grave, whose departure has left a sadness upon his memory. This and a pious admonition to the living, and a humble expression of Christian confidence in immortality, is the language of a thousand church-yards ; and it does not often happen that anything, in a greater degree discriminative or appropriate to the dead or to the living, is to be found in them. This want of discrimination has been ascribed, by Dr. Johnson, in his Essay upon the epitaphs of Pope, to two causes ; first, the scantiness of the objects of human praise ; and, secondly, the want of variety in the characters of men ; or, to use his own words, "to the fact, that the greater part of mankind have no character at all." Such language may be holden without blame among the generalities of common conversation ; but does not become a critic and a moralist speaking seriously upon a serious subject. The objects of admiration in human nature are not scanty, but abundant ; and every man has a character of his own, to the eye that has skill to perceive it. The real cause of the acknowledged want of discrimination in sepulchral memorials is this : That to analyze the characters of others, especially of those whom we love, is not a common or natural employment of men at any time. We are not anxious unerringly to understand the constitution of the minds of those who have soothed, who have cheered, who have supported us ; with whom we have been long and daily pleased or delighted. The affections are their own justification. The light of love in our hearts is a satisfactory evidence that there is a body of worth in the minds of our friends or kindred, whence that light has proceeded. We shrink from the thought of placing their merits and defects to be weighed against each other in the nice balance of pure intellect ; nor do we find much temptation to detect the shades by which a good quality or virtue is discriminated in them from an excellence known by the same general name as it exists in the mind of another : and, least of all, do we incline to these refinements when under the pressure of sorrow, admiration, or regret, or when actuated by any of those feelings which incite men to prolong the memory of their friends and kindred, by records placed in the bosom of the all-uniting and equalizing receptacle of the dead.

The first requisite, then, in an Epitaph is, that it should speak, in a tone that shall sink into the heart, the general language of humanity as connected with the subject of death—the source from which an epitaph proceeds—of death, and of life. To be born and to die are the two points in which all men feel themselves to be in absolute coincidence. This general language may be uttered so strikingly as to entitle an epitaph to high praise ; yet it cannot lay claim to the highest, unless other excellencies be superadded. Passing through all intermediate steps we will attempt to determine at once what these excellencies are, and wherein consists the perfection of this species of composition.—It will be found to lie in a due proportion of the common or universal feeling of humanity to sensations excited by a distinct and clear conception, con-

veyed to the reader's mind, of the individual, whose death is deplored and whose memory is to be preserved ; at least of his character as, after death, it appeared to those who loved him, and lament his loss. The general sympathy ought to be quickened, provoked, and diversified, by particular thoughts, actions, images,—circumstances of age, occupation, manner of life, prosperity which the deceased had known, or adversity to which he had been subject ; and these ought to be bound together and solemnized into one harmony by the general sympathy. The two powers should temper, restrain, and exalt each other. The reader ought to know who and what the man was whom he is called upon to think of with interest. A distinct conception should be given (implicitly where it can, rather than explicitly) of the individual lamented. But the writer of an epitaph is not an anatomist, who dissects the internal frame of the mind ; he is not even a painter, who executes a portrait at leisure and in entire tranquillity : his delineation, we must remember, is performed by the side of the grave ; and, what is more, the grave of one whom he loves and admires. What purity and brightness is that virtue clothed in, the image of which must no longer bless our living eyes ! The character of a deceased friend or beloved kinsman is not seen, nor ought to be seen, otherwise than as a tree through a tender haze or a luminous mist, that spiritualizes and beautifies it ; that takes away, indeed, but only to the end that the parts which are not abstracted may appear more dignified and lovely ; may impress and affect the more. Shall we say, then, that this is not truth, not a faithful image ; and that, accordingly, the purposes of commemoration cannot be answered ?—It is truth, and of the highest order ; for, though doubtless things are not apparent which did exist ; yet, the object being looked at through this medium, parts and proportions are brought into distinct view which before had been only imperfectly or unconsciously seen : it is truth hallowed by love—the joint offspring of the worth of the dead and the affections of the living ! This may easily be brought to the test. Let one, whose eyes have been sharpened by personal hostility to discover what was amiss in the character of a good man, hear the tidings of his death, and what a change is wrought in a moment ! Enmity melts away ; and, as it disappears, unsightliness, disproportion, and deformity, vanish ; and, through the influence of commiseration, a harmony of love and beauty succeeds. Bring such a man to the tombstone on which shall be inscribed an epitaph on his adversary, composed in the spirit which we have recommended. Would he turn from it as from an idle tale ? No ;—the thoughtful look, the sigh, and perhaps the involuntary tear, would testify that it had a sane, a generous, and good meaning ; and that on the writer's mind had remained an impression which was a true abstract of the character of the deceased ; that his gifts and graces were remembered in the simplicity in which they ought to be remembered. The composition and quality of the mind of a virtuous man, contemplated by the side of the grave where his body is mouldering, ought to appear, and be felt as something midway between what he was on earth walking about with his living frailties, and what he may be presumed to be as a Spirit in heaven.

It suffices, therefore, that the trunk and the main branches of the worth of the deceased be boldly and unaffectedly represented. Any further detail, minutely and scrupulously pursued, especially if this be done with laborious and antithetic discriminations, must inevitably frustrate its own purpose; forcing the passing Spectator to this conclusion,—either that the dead did not possess the merits ascribed to him, or that they who have raised a monument to his memory, and must therefore be supposed to have been closely connected with him, were incapable of perceiving those merits; or at least during the act of composition had lost sight of them; for, the understanding having been so busy in its petty occupation, how could the heart of the inurner be other than cold? and in either of these cases, whether the fault be on the part of the buried person or the survivors, the memorial is unaffected and profileless.

Much better is it to fall short in discrimination than to pursue it too far, or to labor unfeelingly. For in no place are we so much disposed to dwell upon these points, of nature and condition, whereby all men resemble each other, as in the temple where the universal Father is worshipped, or by the side of the grave which gathers all human Beings to itself, and ‘equalizes the lofty and the low.’ We suffer and we weep with the same heart; we love and are anxious for one another in one spirit; our hopes look to the same quarter; and the virtues by which we are all to be furthered and supported, as patience, meekness, good-will, Justice, temperance, and temperate desires, are in an equal degree the concern of us all. Let an Epitaph, then, contain at least these acknowledgments to our common nature; nor let the sense of their importance be sacrificed to a balance of opposite qualities or minute distinctions in individual character: which if they do not, (as will for the most part be the case,) when examined, resolve themselves into a trick of words, will, even when they are true and just, for the most part be grievously out of place; for, as it is probable that few only have explored these intricacies of human nature, so can the tracing of them be interesting only to a few. But an epitaph is not a proud writing, shut up for the studious; it is exposed to all—to the wise and the most ignorant; it is condescending, perspicuous, and lovingly solicits regard; its story and admonitions are brief, that the thoughtless, the busy, and the indolent, may not be deterred, nor the impatient tired: the stooping old man comes the engraven record like a second horn-book:—the child is proud that he can read it;—and the stranger is introduced through its mediation to the company of a friend: it is concerning all, and for all:—in the church-yard it is open to the day; the sun looks down upon the stone, and the rains of heaven beat against it.

Yet, though the writer who would excite sympathy is bound in this case, more than in any other, to give proof that he himself has been moved, it is to be remembered, that to raise a monument is a sober and a reflective act; that the inscription which it bears is intended to be permanent, and for universal perusal; and that, for this reason, the thoughts and feelings expressed should be permanent also—liberated from that weakness and anguish of sorrow which is in nature transitory, and which, with instinctive docility, retires from notice. The passion^s should be

N O T E S .

subdued, the emotions controlled ; strong, indeed, but nothing ungovernable or wholly involuntary. Seemliness requires this, and truth requires it also : for how can the narrator otherwise be trusted ? Moreover, a grave is a tranquillizing object : resignation in course of time springs up from it as naturally as the wild flowers, besprinkling the turf with which it may be covered, or gathering round the monument by which it is defended. The very form and substance of the monument which has received the inscription, and the appearance of the letters, testifying with what a slow and laborious hand they must have been engraven, might seem to reproach the author who had given way upon this occasion to transports of mind, or to quick turns of conflicting passion ; though the same might constitute the life and beauty of a funeral oration or elegiac poem.

These sensations and judgments, acted upon perhaps unconsciously, have been one of the main causes why epitaphs so often personate the deceased, and represent him as speaking from his own tomb-stone. The departed Mortal is introduced telling you himself that his pains are gone ; that a state of rest is come ; and he conjures you to weep for him no longer. He admonishes with the voice of one experienced in the vanity of those affections which are confined to earthly objects, and gives a verdict like a superior Being, performing the office of judge, who has no temptations to mislead him, and whose decision cannot but be dispassionate. Thus is death disarmed of its sting, and affliction unsubstantialized. By this tender fiction, the survivors bind themselves to a sadder sorrow, and employ the intervention of the imagination in order that the reason may speak her own language earlier than she would otherwise have been enabled to do. This shadowy interposition also harmoniously unites the two worlds of the living and the dead by their appropriate affections. And it may be observed, that here we have an additional proof of the propriety with which sepulchral inscriptions were referred to the consciousness of immortality as their primal source.

I do not speak with a wish to recommend that an epitaph should be cast in this mould preferably to the still more common one, in which what is said comes from the survivors directly ; but rather to point out how natural those feelings are which have induced men, in all states and ranks of society, so frequently to adopt this mode. And this I have done chiefly in order that the laws, which ought to govern the composition of the other, may be better understood. This latter mode, namely, that in which the survivors speak in their own persons, seems to me upon the whole greatly preferable : as it admits a wider range of notices ; and, above all, because, excluding the fiction which is the groundwork of the other, it rests upon a more solid basis.

Enough has been said to convey our notion of a perfect epitaph ; but it must be borne in mind that one is meant which will best answer the *general* ends of that species of composition. According to the course pointed out, the worth of private life, through all varieties of situation and character, will be most honorably and profitably preserved in memory. Nor would the model recommended less suit public men, in all instances save of those persons who by the greatness of their services in the employments of peace or war, or by the surpassing excellence of their works in art, literature, or science, have made themselves not only univer-

sally known, but have filled the heart of their country with everlasting gratitude. Yet I must here pause to correct myself. In describing the general tenor of thought which epitaphs ought to hold, I have omitted to say, that if it be the *actions* of a man, or even some *one* conspicuous or beneficial act of local or general utility, which have distinguished him, and excited a desire that he should be remembered, then, of course, ought the attention to be directed chiefly to those actions or that act: and such sentiments dwelt upon as naturally arise out of them or it. Having made this necessary distinction, I proceed.—The mighty benefactors of mankind, as they are not only known by the immediate survivors, but will continue to be known familiarly to latest posterity, do not stand in need of biographic sketches, in such a place; nor of delineations of character to individualize them. This is already done by their Works, in the memories of men. Their naked names, and a grand comprehensive sentiment of civic gratitude, patriotic love, or human admiration—or the utterance of some elementary principle most essential in the constitution of true virtue:—or a declaration touching that pious humility and self-abasement, which are ever most profound as minds are most susceptible of genuine exaltation—or an intuition, communicated in adequate words, of the sublimity of intellectual power;—these are the only tribute which can here be paid—the only offering that upon such an altar would not be unworthy.

'What needs my Shakspeare for his honored bones
 The labor of an age in piled stones,
 Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
 Under a starry-pointing pyramid?
 Dear Son of Memory, great Heir of Fame,
 What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
 Thou in our wonder and astonishment
 Hast built thyself a livelong monument,
 And so sepulchred, in such pomp dost lie,
 That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.'

NOTE 11.—P. 196.

'And spires whose 'silent finger points to Heaven.'

An instinctive taste teaches men to build their churches in flat countries with spire-steeplees, which, as they cannot be referred to any other object, point as with silent finger to the sky and stars, and sometimes, when they reflect the brazen light of a rich though rainy sunset, appear like a pyramid of flame burning heaven-ward. See "The Friend," by S. T. Coleridge, No. 14, p. 223.

NOTE 12.—250.

*'That Sycamore, which annually holds
 Within its shade as in a stately tent.'*

*'This Sycamore oft musical with Bees;
 Such Tents the Patriarchs loved.'*

S. T. Coleridge.

Note 13.—P. 271.

'Perish the roses and the flowers of kings.'

The 'Transit gloria mundi' is finely expressed in the Introduction to the Foundation-charters of some of the ancient Abbeys. Some expressions here used are taken from that of the Abbey of St. Mary's, Furness, the translation of which is as follows:—

'Considering every day the uncertainty of life, that the roses and flowers of Kings, Emperors, and Dukes, and the crowns and palms of all the great, wither and decay; and that all things, with an uninterrupted course, tend to dissolution and death: I therefore,' &c.

Note 14.—P. 281.

— 'Earth has lent
Her waters, Air her breezes.'

In treating this subject, it was impossible not to recollect, with gratitude, the pleasing picture, which, in his Poem of the Fleece, the excellent and amiable Dyer has given of the influences of manufacturing industry upon the face of this Island. He wrote at a time when machinery was first beginning to be introduced, and his benevolent heart prompted him to augur from it nothing but good. Truth has compelled me to dwell upon the baneful effects arising out of an ill-regulated and excessive application of powers so admirable in themselves.

Note 15.—P. 300.

'Binding herself by Statute.'

The discovery of Dr. Bell affords marvellous facilities for carrying this effect; and it is impossible to overrate the benefit which might accrue to humanity from the universal application of this simple engine under an enlightened and conscientious government.

2

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